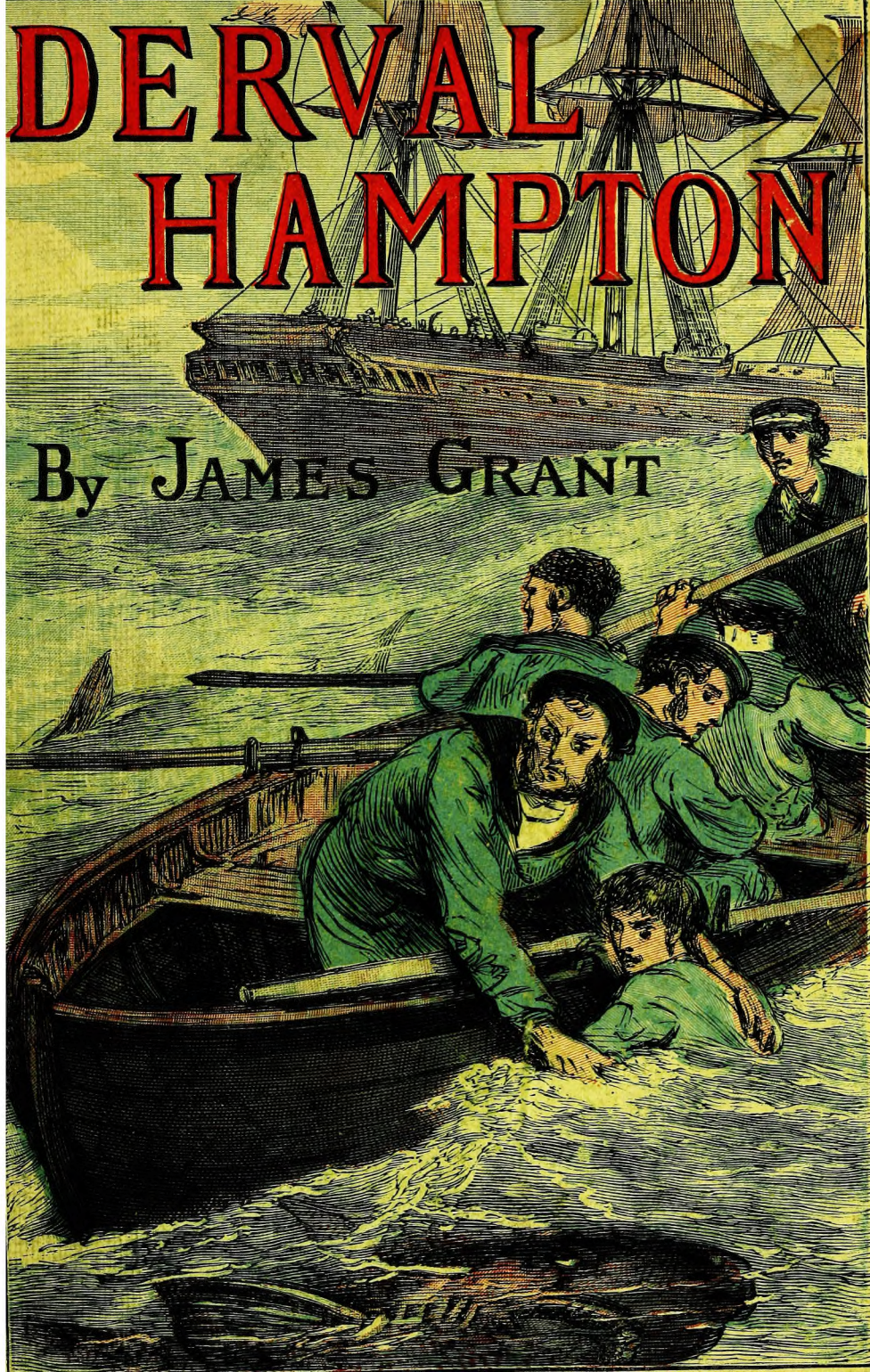




# DERVAL HAMPTON

By JAMES GRANT





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# DERVAL HAMPTON

*A STORY OF THE SEA*

BY

JAMES GRANT

AUTHOR OF "THE ROMANCE OF WAR"

LONDON

GEORGE ROUTLEDGE AND SONS

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# DERVAL HAMPTON.

## (A STORY OF THE SEA.)

---

### CHAPTER I.

“Playing with shells upon the shores of time.”

“I WONDER why Heaven sent us into this world to face the mortifications we have to endure?”

“Do not say this, Greville, dearest; it is not for us to judge; we have but to suffer and endure, and be thankful for life, for health, and that we are not worse off than we are.”

“Thankful for life!” exclaimed the man, bitterly. “Why should I be thankful for a life of poverty, obscurity, and trouble?”

“Trouble is sent, as the preacher tells us, to make us better and draw us closer to God. It is ‘not my will, but Thine be done’; so we ought not to question the mystery of life; and then, husband dear, we have our little boy!”

As she said this, something of a soft smile replaced the angry and far-away expression that filled her husband’s dark eyes.

Greville Hampton and his wife Mary—her

hands busy with work—were seated in the ivy-clad porch of their little cottage on a bright evening in summer. Before them, at the end of the vista down the dell in which it stood, lay the waters of the English Channel glittering in sunlight, as it rolled away from Rockham Bay to craggy Hartland Point, a sheer precipice 300 feet in height. If humble and small in accommodation, the cottage of Finglecombe was pretty externally, with its wealth of creeping plants, and kept scrupulously neat and clean within, though destitute of every luxury.

Before the cottage lay the pretty garden which Greville Hampton tended with his own hands, and where Mary reared and twined her flowers. There were the ripening strawberries, their fresh green leaves lying lightly on beds of yellow straw, the late asparagus and wonderful cucumbers under glass-shades, mellow-flavoured peas in borders, and wonderful nectarines climbing up the wall. Behind the cottage, on the south, lay Finglecombe, (in old Devonian) “The dell with the hazel boundary,” and a lovely dell it was, bordered by gentle slopes, covered with those “apple bowers,” for which the district is so famous, in all their luxuriance and greenery. Yet, all this brought no pleasure to the eye or mind of Greville Hampton, a moody and discontented man, one on whom the world and society had smiled in other days, and thus he was ever comparing the present with the irrecoverable past.

There was an air of great refinement in both husband and wife, an air that contrasted strongly and strangely with their plain attire and circumscribed dwelling. Greville Hampton's face was dark in complexion, aquiline in feature, a very handsome face, one quite warranted to claim the unmistakable admiration his wife had for it, and yet it was not a pleasing one. His brow was indicative of intellect and courage; his lip, shaded by a black moustache, was indicative of a resolute will and firm purpose; and his dark hazel eyes, if stern and even gloomy in their normal expression, could soften with a depth of affection when they dwelt on the face of Mary, on the child that was playing at their feet, or at the approach of a friend, and showed that he had a warm heart under the crust in which he was wont to hide it.

Early disappointment, great monetary losses, and a wrong more real than fancied, the loss of a title and patrimony, had much to do with the latter, and hence came the bitter expression that at times stole over his well-formed mouth, and the shadow that clouded a really handsome face.

Mary was indeed a lovely woman, but her slight girlish figure, and the bright tint of colour on her soft, Madonna-like cheek, seemed to speak of a delicacy of constitution, not quite suited for the hardships and trials consequent upon the loss of all to which she had been at one time accustomed. Her dress was coarse and plain, yet arranged so



tastefully, that her figure made it look graceful, and it seemed — humble though the material—to repose on her rounded bust and limbs with something suggestive of distinction and placid elegance.

Mary was a brunette, yet with a wonderfully pure complexion, with small hands and feet, large dark eyes, and dark silky braided hair. Like Annie Laurie, of the tender old Scottish song, “her voice was low and sweet,”—soft as the low notes of the stock-dove, and yet men always spoke to her with a strange sensation of timidity. Often did the touch of her cool soft hand soothe Greville Hampton in his times of dejection, and he found hope and sympathy in the earnest light of her unrepublishing eyes.

She was fond of dress, and what pretty woman is not? and a time there was when she had indulged to the full in stylish things, and always wore silks of the most delicate colours in the carriage, or in the evening; but she had to content herself now with dresses of other material and more sombre tints, that were turned more than once, as she had to do much of her own economical millinery, and darn her gloves again and again; but Mary was always content, and would smile happily when Greville would say, with something of his old lover-like gallantry, “Dearest Mary, it is you who will make any dress seem charming, and not dress that enhances you.”

Between them, and at their feet, sat their

only child, little Derval, a pretty golden-haired boy of six, intent on playing alternately with a toy ship and building a house of little wooden blocks, which he would rear and carefully construct again and again, each time that the tiny edifice was finished, demolishing it with a shout of laughter to begin his labour anew

"Come, Derval," said his mamma, after they had been watching him, fondly and silently, for nearly half-an-hour, while the sun sank beyond the sea, "it is time for bed, so put away your toys, darling."

"Oh, I wish the sun wouldn't go down just yet," the little fellow exclaimed; "do let me make one more Pixies' house, mamma."

"Pixies!" said Greville, with one of his bitter laughs. "By Jove! I wish that the Pixies, be they fairies or fiends, would show us where some treasure is buried, or teach me the art of growing rich!"

"God grant, Greville dearest," said Mary, meekly, "that the child may always be as happy and innocent as he is now."

"God grant, I say, that he may be rich—rich as we once were—richer, at least, than we are to-night."

"Wealth does not bring happiness, Greville."

"It brings the nearest approach to it, Mary; a light heart generally goes with a heavy purse. It is not so much for myself, as for the child and you, Mary, that I wish

the past could come again—but the past with its experience. 'Twere useless else. You are lost here, with your perfect manner, your sweetness, your talents and high accomplishments."

"Lost when I am with you?"

"Yes, lost; who and what are our immediate neighbours?"

Mary smiled silently, for she knew well that the occupants of Finglecome village—a village as red as the soil, consisting only of rude cob-cottages as they are called—were only weavers of pillow-lace; and that the homely manners and slip-shod conversation of these, and of the adjacent farmers, with their incessant talk of short-horns and the merits of the Devonshire breed, their cows and "yowes," the weather and the turnip-fly, worried and bored her husband at times, though he was too well-bred to let them see that it did so; and they, on their part, were perfectly aware that there was a vast difference and distance between themselves and the mysterious and lonely gentlefolks who vegetated in the sequestered little cottage of Finglecombe.

And yet, how Greville Hampton envied the contentment of the dwellers in those cob-cottages—people with whom the world seemed to go precisely as they wished it to do; and who deemed that human life out of Finglecombe and beyond the circuit of its interests and apple-orchards, must be a dull affair indeed for the greatest portion of mankind.

“Poor Derval!” he sighed, as he saw the reluctance with which the child at last gathered up his toys; “Dryden was right—‘men are but children of a larger growth’; children who often toil a lifetime in rearing fabrics unstable as yours. Kiss papa, darling, and now to bed.”

So while Mary bore away her darling, undressed him, smoothed all his golden curls, and tucked him tenderly into his little crib, while she knelt beside it, folded his little pink hands devoutly, and made him repeat after her a simple childish prayer, of love and faith, and that God might bless papa and mamma, and give Derval a good night’s rest; while, after this, she had to tell him stories of the flowers in the garden, the birds and the little lambs, and especially of the Pixies, those wonderful Devonshire fairies, who, though invisibly small, ride the farmers’ horses nearly to death, steal the fruit and pound their own cider in holes and corners; and while she covered his rosy cheeks with the tenderest kisses ere he coaxed himself to sleep, her moody husband lost in his own thoughts, his briar-root pipe grown cold, had been gazing on the sea, and the wide expanse of Barnstaple Bay shining in the last glow of the set sun.

The beauty of the Devonshire coast, with all its bluffs and rocks, its wonderful verdure and glorious “apple-bowers now mellowing in the moon,” had no charms for the soul of Greville Hampton, whose mind at that time

was running on the London life from which he was a hopeless exile now, the life in which he once bore a brilliant part.

Well did he know all that was passing, and on the *tapis* at that identical season! That the club at Sandown was flourishing as it never flourished before; that Prince's was in all its glory; that the meetings of the Coaching Clubs and four-in-hands had all been arranged, without *his* team of roans being expected at the Serpentine; that Richmond, Hurlingham, and the Orleans Club were all extant, though they knew not him, and that even his name was recalled at none of them now. Already had the attractions of Epsom and Ascot begun, combining those of hospitable country-house life with wild excitement of the race-course and betting-ring, and he knew that the sons and daughters of pleasure were striving to crush as much brilliant amusement as was possible into the interval between flowery Whitsuntide and the epoch of Goodwood in its glory, and the yacht regattas at Cowes.

His mind, we say, was full of all these things—fierce, high, bitter, and regretful thoughts all mingling together—when Mary, full only of the sleeping face of her child, gentle and unrepining, content and hopeful, crept back to resume her knitting by his side.

Her knitting! How the proud man winced as he saw her white hands so humbly employed.

“Derval is asleep?” said he.

“ Yes ; and the dear pet lamb, how sweetly he does sleep ! ” replied Mary, her soft voice almost tremulous with the pleasure of her maternal love ; “ I remained watching him for a time, and wondering—wondering in my heart—”

“ What, Mary ? ”

“ What awaited him in the unseen future,” she replied, as she fixed her eyes, not upon the face of her husband, but on the far horizon of the sea, yet tinted with ruddy gold by the sun that had set.

“ Were the book of destiny laid before you, Mary, would you have the courage to turn a leaf ? ” asked her husband in a strange and hard voice.

“ I fear, Greville, dear, I should lack the courage,” said Mary, as she ceased to knit, and her white hands lay idle in her lap.

“ If wealth—if riches—be not written there, I care not what the leaf contains ! Not that I entirely believe in destiny ; in many instances we make our own, as I, to a certain extent, made ours, by becoming a victim of others ; but a destiny over which I have no control deprives me of my birthright ; and I, who ought now to be twelfth Lord Oakhampton, and tenth Lord of Wistmanswood, am a poor and needy man. So I say again, Mary, if *wealth* be not before our little Derval, in the years to come, I care not what may be, with all my love of him ! ”

“ Oh, Greville, do not—do not talk thus ! ” said Mary, imploringly ; “ suppose death were

to come, and our child, the sole bright star in our otherwise cloudy sky, went out, leaving us in utter darkness!" Her voice broke at the idea of the hopeless desolation she conjured up, and her eyes filled with tears, for she was a sensitive creature. "Suppose this were to happen," she continued, "and you saw me, with fond and lingering hands, folding and putting past, as priceless treasures, the little garments they had made, the tiny socks they had knitted, and the broken toys that would be required no more, while turning away heart-sick from the sight of happy parents, whose little ones were spared to them, and striving to console ourselves with the conviction that all things come from Heaven. I share your hope and wish, Greville, that Derval may be rich, and great too, but I would rather that he were good than either!"

"Rich he shall be, I hope, before I die," exclaimed Greville Hampton; "and I have strange dreams at times, Mary, that seem the harbingers of something to come," he added gravely, and in a lower tone, "Wealth——"

"What need of wealth, dearest? we can save, out of our little pittance, for Derval; he is the only chick we have to scrape for," she interrupted him, and took his passive hands caressingly within her own.

"Oh, Mary," he replied bitterly, without heeding her question, "I have in my time feasted at the table of Dives, while Lazarus



stood without the gate, and now I seem, in turn, to have taken his place."

"How *can* you talk thus wildly, dear Greville; have we not every necessary that life requires?"

"True; but not the position and the luxuries to which we were accustomed."

This was but one of many such conversations to which she was accustomed, and Mary sighed wearily at her husband's incessant repining, as she said, while glancing furtively at her plain dress:

"Luxuries can be done without; but you have been having some of your tantalising dreams again."

"I have, indeed, Mary," said he, with his eyes fixed on vacancy, for the visions that haunted his mind in the hours of sleep by night, or when his thoughts were drifting back to the material world in the early hours of morning, showed the tenor of those other dreams that haunted him in the hours of wakefulness by day.

"Was it again of the mysterious treasure ship—the quaint old Argosy stranded in yonder Barnstaple Bay, deserted by her crew and left high and dry by the ebbing sea, with the great golden doubloons flowing in torrents through her gaping seams, and piled like glittering oyster-shells in heaps upon the sand, where you and I were gathering them up in handfuls—for you often have such fancies in your sleep, Greville?" she added, nestling her sweet face lovingly and laugh-

ingly on his neck, anxious to soothe and humour him.

“It was not of ships, Mary,” he replied, with an arm caressingly around her; “but of a strange and wondrous land—a scene amid stupendous mountain ranges, like what we have heard of, or read of, as being in the Great Basin of California, or the Cordilleras, hemmed in on every side by mighty steepes. It was indeed a strange dream, Mary, and most vivid, distinct and coherent in all its details—painfully so, when the moment of waking came. Falling aslant the mountains the sun’s rays struck upon a streak in a mass of volcanic rock, which gave back a yellow gleam. I struck the mass with a hammer—a fragment fell at my feet—it was gold—pure gold! Again and again I struck, and huge nuggets of the precious metal fell down before me, while at every stroke my heart beat painfully yet exultingly, and my breath came thick and fast. I was there, I thought, alone; the land around me was my own, with the conviction that far in the bosom of the mighty mountains ran the strata of precious metal—a wondrous land, where the teeth of the black cattle, of the mules and the goats that grazed upon their grassy sides, were tinted yellow by the gold with which the soil abounded. Could my dreamland have been in California?” he asked, as if talking to himself. “What visions of boundless wealth came before me; and what mighty power

would that wealth command ! Again and again I wielded my hammer, and the heap before me seemed to increase, till my brain became giddy with the thoughts that swept athwart it. Could my vision have been of California ? ” he continued dreamily to himself, rather than to Mary, “ it must have been—it must have been among the Rocky Mountains that my soul was wandering while my body slept. ”

“ Oh, Greville, darling, don’t talk in this wild way ”

“ I should like to search for that place, Mary ; it exists somewhere, and I am sure I should know it again. ”

“ Heavens, Greville, you would not think of going there, and on the strength only of a dream ? ”

“ No, Mary ; you are not adapted to the life of a digger’s wife, ” said he with a tender smile.

“ As little as you are to be a digger, ” she replied, while caressing his hand, which, though manly, was a white one.

“ The dream seemed a long, long one, Mary, though doubtless short enough in reality, so true it is, a writer tells us, that there is a drowsy state between sleeping and waking, when you dream more in five minutes with your eyes half open and yourself half conscious of everything passing around you, than you would do in five nights with your eyes fast closed and your senses wrapt in perfect unconsciousness ! So it was with me

Mary; but the mountains seemed to sink; the scene to change and resolve itself into sweet and peaceful Finglecombe, with all its orchards and the Bay shining in the rising moon, even as it is doing now; but the heap of golden ore was *still before me*—till I awoke with a start, to find myself again—a beggar!”

“But beside *me*,” said Mary, with a little laugh that ended in a sigh; “and if your dream will bear reading at all, Greville, it must be that your riches lie, not in California, but here in Finglecombe; though what they are, or where they are, unless they be Derval and me,” she added, kissing him, “goodness only knows.”

But full of his vivid dream, Greville Hampton made no response immediately. He sat lost in thought, passively gazing on the Bay, glittering and rippling beyond the boundary of his garden where a fallen beech of vast dimensions lay, with its end half-hidden in a rose-tree that was a mass of bloom. There was silence in the place—a drowsy summer silence; the sounds of the distant cob-village came faintly mingled with the lap, lap, lapping of the waves upon the shore.

“Supper waits, ma’am,” said Patty Fripp, suddenly appearing in the porch, which was a veritable bower of roses and Virginia-creeper, for Patty—a robust and honest countrywoman, who was nurse to Master Derval, cook and housemaid by turns, and all together at times, and had come as a retainer

to his father's house in better days, when she was a blooming lass of eighteen—was close on the wrong side of fifty now, but true as steel in their altered fortunes to Greville Hampton and her mistress.

He allowed himself to be led by Mary indoors, where in their snug little parlour, a room made pretty by many a knick-knack, the work of her industrious hands, a plain repast awaited them; the home-brewed ale frothed creamily in a great antique silver tankard, that had served his sire and grandsire before him, and which, nearly the sole family relic, bore the heraldic choughs borne by so many Cornish and Devonshire families; and there were ruddy cheese, snow-white bread, and dainty butter, all prepared by Mary's pretty hands; but there was a shadow upon Greville's brow to-night that even she could not dispel; for while he regretted very bitterly—half savagely, almost—the luxuries to which he had once been accustomed in Belgravian dining-rooms and Pall Mall clubs, the rich *entrées* and rare wines, Mary—who had also been accustomed to luxury—took her food contentedly, and thought the while of the many men and women and little children—children like her own golden-haired Derval—who had neither dinner nor supper to sit down to.

Her perfect and sublime trust in the conviction that all things were ordered for the best, and her sweet yet strong reliance on God in every way, were certainly touching to

Greville, but he failed utterly in falling in with her views, or sharing her content and trustfulness, and when assured by her that thousands and thousands of others were not so well off in worldly matters as themselves, he failed also to find any ground for complacency in any such statistics, and so, whether it was the influence of his golden dream, or of his general discontent, on this night, his broad open brow, his firm lips, and dark eyes, wore that peculiar expression which they did at times, and which we have said was certainly not a pleasing one, when he deemed himself to be haunted by his evil destiny—the Demon of Impecuniosity.

Mary left nothing undone or untried to add to his comforts, and he knew that her beautiful and delicate hands had often done, and had yet to do, rougher work than they were ever intended for, though it was often done in secret, to prevent him from seeing it; but Patty Fripp knew of it well.

“Yes,” said Greville Hampton, as if assenting to his own thoughts, after he had drained the antique silver tankard, and fixed his eyes for a moment upon the shield *argent*, with three choughs, *gules*, engraved thereon, and the crested chough that surmounted a coronet with the motto *Clarior e Tenebris* (Brighter from Obscurity), “yes, may the words be ominous of good! If I could but think that Derval would certainly be rich, and should never know the privations we have suffered

and the deprivations to which we have been subjected, I think, Mary, I could die happy ”

“ The same repining thoughts still, Greville ! ” said Mary, softly and entreatingly.

“ Yes, still, Mary.”

“ Derval,” said she, as she resumed her knitting, “ has his youth and all his life before him.”

“ But without some effort on my part it will be a life of half penury and whole obscurity in Finglecombe. But how is that effort to be made? You would not have our boy grow up the associate and companion of these villagers and lace-makers! Among whom else will his lot be cast? I would rather see him in his grave, Mary.”

“ Do not say so. The misfortunes you have undergone have made you unreasonably bitter; but let us hope, Greville, for the best,” she added, running her slender fingers caressingly through his thick dark hair.

“ Bitter! unreasonable! Have I not been mulcted of my proper inheritance? Is not the position—the rank which ought to have been mine and my father’s before me—now held by another? Have I not been robbed by fashionable gamesters, swindlers, and false friends! ”

“ Yet it is for such society as those that you repine! ”

“ It is not so, Mary; what happened once could never happen again. I know better now ”

“ The man who calls himself Lord Oakhampton——”



“And who holds the broad lands and stately house that should be mine—knows well, if the world at large knows it not—through a quibble he is a usurper! Oh, my own Mary!” he exclaimed, while tears glittered in his flashing eyes, and he glanced with angry scorn round the tiny apartment, “when I wooed and won you in the happy past time, you who were reared in the lap of luxury, wealth, and refinement, I little foresaw that I would ever bring you, in the end, to a home so humble as this!”

“But I am with you to share it, Greville, and I do not repine—unless, perhaps, for the child’s sake. But why do you tell me these things again and again, darling? Is it,” she added, with one of her brightest and most witching smiles, “to lure me into repeating how much and how truly I love you, as if I were a girl again in that second London season, which ended so sweetly for us both?”

She would have thrown her soft arms around him, but a spirit of anger filled his heart, and he paced to and fro the little room like a caged lion; and Mary regarded him anxiously, for she had a dread of her husband’s crotchets taking some active and dangerous form, especially if he were again to have that Californian dream; for when one’s life, as a writer says, is a constant trial, “the moments of respite seem only to substitute the heaviness of dread for the heaviness of actual suffering;” and Mary was indeed far from strong. There was a greater

delicacy in her constitution than Greville was the least aware of, a delicacy that, though it alarmed herself, for his sake and their child's she kept her lips sealed on the subject, lest the knowledge thereof might add to the regret of Greville for the past, and his "worry" for the present.

"If this life cannot be endured, it must be cured—to reverse a vulgar saw, Mary," said he, continuing his short promenade; "if I cannot be rich, Derval shall be so, if any scheme of mine can achieve that end; and as soon as he is old enough, I shall teach him how money can make money, and how to keep it hard and fast—hard and fast—when it is made, and not be a fool like his father."

"Teach not the child thus, Greville, I implore you," said Mary, relinquishing her knitting; "of what avail will it be, if I strive to make him virtuous, kind to the poor, prudent and industrious, if you instil precepts so stern, so cold and selfish into his young mind? If you have affection for me, Greville dearest, abandon such cruel ideas and plans, or I will begin to think you a changed man, and the Greville Hampton of to-day is not Greville that won the love of my girlhood—yea, and of my life," she added with great tenderness.

"I am a changed man—I admit it—a sorely changed man, in all things but my love for you, Mary," he replied, as he stooped and kissed her bright little upturned face, and

perhaps thought for a moment—but a moment only—that no man could be unhappy who had the smile and love of such a woman as Mary to brighten the path and lighten the burden of his life.

“Riches are good and a godsend,” said she, “if employed aright and not as a means of pleasure only.”

“Aright?” repeated Greville, who was thinking of the clubs he once frequented, his whilom team of roans, and Ascot perhaps.

“Pleasure as a means of doing good and protecting the poor, assisting merit and rewarding ingenuity. The rich man who presumes on his wealth, and the poor man who desponds on his poverty are—”

“Oh, don’t preach, Mary darling, leave that to our friend Asperges Laud. You are a duck and an angel, but I can’t quite agree with you,” he added with a sigh as he filled his briar-root with tobacco of a kind he would have disdained to smoke once.

Many emotions combined to fill Mary’s eyes with tears, but to conceal them she turned away to seek Patty’s aid in the preparation of some jellies for one of her pensioners—for though so poor herself she had several—a deformed girl who was dying of consumption; and in spare times she was wont to read good and amusing books by the bedsides of the old and blind, who were ailing or unable to be abroad. She had even pensioners among the little birds, for whom she

daily spread out crumbs, especially in winter, upon her doorstep, whither they would come without fear of Mary's pet cat, which was too well fed to meddle with them.

Greville Hampton was in an unusually bitter mood that night, and long, long he sat abandoned to it after Mary had given a final but lingering look at the little subject of their anxieties, folded in his pretty cot, "like the callow cygnet in its nest," and then sought her pillow.

Evil spirits—envy, anger, and avarice—were struggling in the man's heart, with a keen sense of unmerited wrong inflicted on him, of injustice he had suffered, the black ingratitude of friends, and of his own extravagance and reckless folly in the past; and had there been a close observer present to watch his handsome features, they would have read by the working of these, how each passion prevailed in turn.

Finally, he emptied his cherished briar-root by tapping it on the hearth, put it in its case with an emphatic snap, and muttering, as he sought the side of his sleeping wife,

"Surely God will hear Mary's prayers, if not mine, that Derval may be rich—but never the luckless creature I am to-night."

Derval, a chubby child of six, with rosy dimpled cheeks, his mother's snowy skin, and his father's deep dark eyes, with a wealth of golden curls that rose crisp and in upward spouts from his forehead, grew fast, while the care of his boyish education devolved

wholly on the delicate Mary, for Greville, though educated at Eton and finished off at Oxford, was too erratic by nature, and with all his love of their offspring, too impatient to share in the task of tutelage; in which, eventually, she was fully and powerfully, to her great gratitude, assisted by the Reverend Asperges Laud, the only visitor who shed a little light on their humble dwelling, and who was also the only link, as it seemed, that they cared to preserve between their past life and the present.

In his fortieth year, the Curate of Finglecombe—a place in which he was utterly lost, because of its obscurity, and where he subsisted on a mere pittance—was a man of considerable talent, and no small accomplishments. He had gained high academic honours in philosophy and theology, and was already known as author of several celebrated prize essays; he therefore proved a valuable friend to Mary and her little boy.

The Reverend Asperges Laud, M.A., Oxon., belonged not to the days of “nasal clerks and top-booted parsons.” He was a man of broad and advanced views, with somewhat stately, yet very soft and gentle manners, who intoned his services, had matins and evensong, wore a coat with remarkably long tails, a Roman collarino and a broad hat of soft felt garnished with a black silk rosette, and was furtively addicted to the flute.

He had little choir boys in white collars and black surplices; called his altar-table

“the sanctuary,” and had four candles thereon which, in wholesome fear of the Court of Arches and His Grace of Canterbury, he dared not light as yet; and there was much about him that—according to the Methodists in the district—savoured of the City of the Seven Hills, yet, “a man he was to all the country dear.”

All the neighbours about Finglecombe, but none more than Mr. Asperges Laud, were delighted with Mary’s grave, sweet eyes, her softness of manner, her goodness of heart, her refined and cultivated mind, all of which lent additional charms to a certainly very statuesque little face.

And Greville had won the hearts of the farmers, by riding, controlling and breaking in, for one of them, a dare-devil horse, that no jockey in Devonshire could ride, and had thereby won himself emphatically the reputation of being “a man every inch of him.”

But both husband and wife were very reserved, and the few who ventured to call on them when they first dropped from the clouds, as it were, into Finglecombe, could not truthfully assert that, though politely welcomed, they were urged to come again. Whether this came of a sense of shyness, or of haughty exclusiveness, none could precisely decide. Some averred it was the former in the wife and the latter in the husband, and perhaps they were right.

“Both seem only to live for each other

and their little boy," said Mr. Asperges Laud, their only and regular visitor in the end, and he was right certainly.

Thanks to the tutelage of the worthy curate, the childish mind of little Derval Hampton began to expand, and he ceased to wonder if the sea he saw rolling in Barnstaple Bay, between craggy Hartland Point and sandy Braunton Burrows, and the uplands that bordered Finglecombe, were all the world contained; for dreams, visions and a distant knowledge of other seas and shores came upon him, and with the knowledge there came in time the usual boyish crave to see and know them.

In Finglecombe, a lonely dell, where the apple groves grew entangled, and a brawling stream, concealed by their foliage from the sunshine, ran between banks of moss-grown stones towards the Bay, was an excavation or cavern in a wooded hill, known as the Pixies Parlour, a place he was wont to explore with fear and excitement, but in the daytime of course; and near it on the shore was a place, never to be visited at any time, for therein were sights to be seen that none could look upon and live—the Horses' Hole, a cavern dark as night, full of pools of water, and running an unknown distance under ground, wherein a horse black as jet had found its way, and came forth with its coat changed to snowy white; but as he grew older the place of deepest interest for him was the ruined Castle of Oakhampton, and the place

named Wistmanswood, whence came the titles of that peerage his father deemed his right.

The wood always impressed him with fear and haunted him in his dreams—for it was one of the wonders of Devonshire, and is said to have been unchanged in aspect since the days of the Norman Conquest—a vast grove of dwarf oaks, interspersed with mountain ashes, everywhere covered by masses of fern and parasitical plants, growing amid gigantic blocks of stone,—the clefts of which, and the thorny undergrowth, are swarming with poisonous adders, and form the shelter of innumerable foxes—a strange and weird place, amid the desolation of which the scream of the bittern is yet heard, and the whole appearance of which conveys the idea of the hoary age in the vegetable world of creation; yet here on more than one occasion did the somewhat gloomy Greville Hampton lead his impressionable and shrinking boy by the hand, for to him the old Druid wood in its waste and decay seemed sympathetic with his own fallen condition and impoverished state. And but for the sake of the future of that dear child whose hand he held, and unconsciously almost crushed in the bitter energy of his thoughts at such times, he would have wished himself as dead as one of those hoary trees; for to Greville Hampton often came a strange feeling of weariness of life, and then he longed for that day to come, when failure or success in aught would matter



nothing, when the sun would rise, but not for him, and all the world go on as usual while he should be at rest and beyond all care and trouble.

And little Derval in the golden morning of his life, often wondered already what it was that clouded his father's brow and made his manner so *triste* and pre-occupied.

"It is not given to man to choose his own position in this world," said Mr. Asperges Laud gently to Hampton on one occasion; "but it is given to him to feel honestly content, and without useless repining, in the place so assigned."

"Another and better place in the world than that I now occupy, *was* assigned to me; but—" and Greville Hampton paused, as something very like an imprecation rose to his quivering lips.

Meanwhile Derval, save for his mother's care and Mr. Laud's tuition, would have grown up in rather a rough and scrambling manner; as it was he was a little undisciplined; prone to bird-nesting, seeking the eggs of the choughs and cormorants among the rocks; helping himself to apples in anyone's orchard, and rambling far afield, and clambering up eminences where he could see the variously tinted groves that bordered on the deep blue bay, the distant sea itself—glorious, glittering and far-stretching; the brown boats drawn up on the golden sands; the passing ships under white canvas, or the steamers with volumes of dusky smoke

curling far on the ambient air. He was rather addicted, we fear, to playing the truant, and especially of skipping if he could the afternoon class for catechism held by Mr. Laud in his church at Finglecombe, a quaint old fane, concerning which there is a terrible old legend well-known in Devonshire. In 1638 a ball of fire burst into it during time of service, killing and wounding, or scorching, sixty-six persons, and this event took in time a wild form, and we are told how the devil, dressed in black, inquired his way on that identical Sunday of a woman who kept a little ale-house at the end of the Combe, and offered her money to become his guide.

But she, distrusting him, offered him a tankard of good Devonshire cyder, which went hissing and steaming down his throat; and her suspicions were confirmed, when, as he rode off towards the church, she saw his cloven foot, and a few minutes after the terrible catastrophe occurred, and Finglecombe church was strewn with dead and dying—a story that often made little Derval cower in his crib in the gusty nights of winter.

What was to be his future, some twelve years hence, was the ever-recurring thought of his parents.

Greville feared he would inevitably grow up a rough country lad, and already, man-like, he shivered at the idea of Derval—*his* son—becoming such, and in the time to come, getting up “a copse and hedgerow flirtation” with a

daughter of some cob-cottager—marrying her it might be, and being thus inevitably dragged down into the mire. At such thoughts his heart used to die within him.

We have said that Mary Hampton's constitution was a peculiarly delicate one, and now an illness fell upon her which was to prove only the beginning of the end.

Mr. Laud averred that at Christmas-time none could decorate his little church, especially "the sanctuary" thereof, so tastefully as Mary, with scarlet hollyberries and green glistening leaves, and so, on one occasion having prolonged her labours in the cold, damp edifice far into the late hours of a winter night, she caught a chill, fevered, and became hopelessly consumptive. Her cheeks grew hollow, her lips pale, and there came into her sweet sad eyes a pathetic and settled intensity of expression.

She was desired by the doctor to cease from exertion, to abstain from all household work, and to drink plenty of good wine, to procure which Greville Hampton deprived himself of many little things to which in his reduced position he had been accustomed—an occasional cigar, or a glass of cheap Marsala; and when he thought of the past, the strong man's tender and loving heart was wrung, when he heard her hacking cough, and he saw her seated, pale and feeble, her delicate hands unable to persevere even in sewing a little jacket for Derval that lay on the table before her.

And now the kind curate, whose threadbare coat covered a noble heart, brought her many a bunch of luxurious grapes, and many a bottle of good wine—port of fabulous antiquity—which had been sent to himself from the Hall, the abode of the Squire, whom Greville had known in other days, but who now knew *him* not.

To procure comforts for Mary, in his desperation he appealed to his remote kinsman, Lord Oakhampton ; but the application was ignored—no answer ever came, and for some time black fury filled the heart of the proud and fiery, but powerless and impoverished man.

Anon he thought, what other treatment could he expect ?

Did not Lord Oakhampton know well that in society, on every occasion, he, Greville Hampton, had denounced him as the usurper of his property and title—a denunciation the truth of which, legally, as yet, he could not prove ?

“ Oh,” he would exclaim, “ for a little of the wealth I have wasted in the foolish past time—for Mary’s sake—for Mary’s sake ! ”

How bitter it was to look back in the light of experience and think of what might be now, had he been wiser than he was ! And his whole soul recoiled at the contemplation of the awful loneliness of life without her, if Mary were taken from him.

Her fast failing health drew him from his usual selfish and useless repining over the past, or if he did so, it was for her sake alone

now ; for that she *was* failing and passing away from him day by day, became painfully apparent ; a cough shook her delicate form, and again and again was her handkerchief soaked in blood. And he could only groan over the poverty that precluded all change of air, or scene, and the employment of greater medical skill than that possessed by the country practitioner. But no skill could have availed Mary ; and the frail tenure of her life, despite all his love and anxiety, was only a thing of time.

The consumption that was wasting her delicate form only served to make her beauty seem more tender, alluring, and pathetic to the eyes of her sorrow-stricken husband, to whom she said more than once, with her head reclined on his breast—

“ If I am taken from you, Greville darling, I trust you will think of the past less regretfully, of the future more hopefully, and remember that we are, while here, but as ‘ little children playing with shells upon the shore of time.’ ”

“ You are too good for this rough and bitter world,” said he, as his tears fell hotly on her soft and rippling hair, and thought in his heart, “ Oh, why does God take her and leave *me* ? ”

And he clasped her to his heart, as if by the mere strength of his love, and strength of his arms too, he might protect and keep her with him, and kissed her more tenderly than he had ever done in his lover days, for

a holier emotion was in his heart now, and to him it seemed that touches of great sweetness came and went about her lips and into her unusually luminous eyes, though their expression grew more weary day by day, and there came into them also that strange, weird, and far-off look that belongs, not to this world, but to the life that is gradually ebbing away from it, and this expression Greville Hampton saw and read with acute mental agony.

"God is taking me away from you, darlings," she said softly, one evening; "but you will always be true and loving to each other for my sake."

Little Derval clung to his father, unable yet to realise the great sorrow that had come upon both.

Why prolong this part of our story? At last all was over, and Greville, worn out with grief and long watching, was led away like a child by the curate from the chamber of death, where his Mary lay, still rarely beautiful, as a piece of sculpture, in her last repose. All seemed terribly silent in the little cottage now; the buzzing of the flies in the sunshine, and the ticking of a clock alone were heard, unless it might be a sob from old Patty Fripp in the kitchen, where she sat rocking herself to and fro, with her apron over her head, or if she moved about it was with soft and stealthy tread, as if she feared to wake someone.

"Dead—gone—left him—his other self—it could not be!" he whispered in his soul, for

he could not believe, in his great sorrow, that it was all happening to *him*. Surely it was some horrible nightmare, from which he would awake to find his little world going on as before !

But day followed day, each adding fresh details to the calamity, and that of the funeral came inexorably, the closing scene of all.

As one in a dream, Greville Hampton saw the episode like a grim phantasmagoria. He heard the bell tolling, and heard Mr. Laud sob, as he met the few mourners at the churchyard gate, and led the way to the grave, repeating the fine words of the burial service.

Grasping his father's hand, little Derval, with a stunned look and dry eyes, dry with wonder and a great fear, saw the coffin going down—down—till it disappeared, and then a cry burst from him, for he knew that mamma was there—there in that cruel coffin which had left his sight for ever, and he began, child-like, to understand the dire and dreadful reality !

At last the scene closed ; the horrible jarring of shovels, gravel, and earth had ceased, and Greville Hampton came back to his broken and desolate home, where he sat like a man turned to stone, twisting fatuously, yet caressingly, a tress of shining dark brown hair, all that remained to him now of Mary, save the little boy, who nestled, with scared and wistful eyes, beside his knee.

The drawn blinds had for some days told all the passers-by that there was death in the cottage at Finglecombe. Strangers hurried past with a momentary glance, and thought no more of it, in the bright sunshine and business of life ; but some there were who looked sorrowfully and went by with slower step, and there were the poor who missed the ministering hand of Mary Hampton. Even now the little birds, for whom she was wont to spread out crumbs, were tapping with their beaks at the window.

The blinds were drawn up now, and an unnatural flood of sunny light seemed to fill the place. Everything Greville's haggard glance fell on seemed to have a history of its own, a tender association, connected with her who had passed away. The little womanly trifles her hands had made to brighten this, their latter, humble home, were all there still ; the cheap but artistic-looking cretonne with which her pretty and industrious fingers had deftly covered the furniture, brought back to memory the song she sang while doing so ; the water-colours on the wall were her work too, scenes associated with the past years and long vanished happiness ; and no comfort could be gathered from Tennyson's hackneyed couplet—

“ 'Tis better to have loved and lost,  
Than never to have loved at all.”

The terrible distinctness with which the first clod of earth fell—as it seemed to him



—on Mary's tender breast, was yet ringing in Greville's ears, together with the cry that escaped from Derval.

So Mary was gone, and for her the long, long night of the grave had begun !

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## CHAPTER II.

“Therefore he loved gold in special.”—*Chaucer*.

“It is a great calamity, a heavy dispensation!” said a neighbour to Patty Fripp.

“He will get over it in time—the master,” said others, especially the women; “all men get over these things—he’ll marry again, no doubt; he is too young to live all alone in the world.”

Patty was very indignant at this suggestion being made already.

“Time tries all, and soothes all,” said another gossip; “we shall see by and by—men don’t break their hearts for love, look you. And how about the little boy?”

“Poor little soul! he is fretting sorely for his mother,” said Patty, polishing her face with her checked apron, after having ‘a good cry’; “but that is just human natur, I s’pose.”

To the lonely man it seemed strange that Mary was no longer in the cottage at Finglecombe, and it was difficult for him, for a time, to realise the idea that she was gone

for ever from her place ; that he would never see her again ; and that morning and night would come inexorably , the weeks become months, and the months become years ; and that no Mary, with all her great love and tenderness, was there to bear a part in the long vista of life that lay before him.

His loneliness became at times insupportable, and he was frequently absent from home—a circumstance which never occurred in Mary's time. On these occasions the long and sleepless hours of night were terrible to little Derval, with his true Devonshire dread of the supernatural, for he had no longer the sweet consciousness of the near presence of his watchful mother.

At such times, till sleep sealed his eyes, he had but one thought--that out there in the dew and darkness of night, as in the sunshine by day, was the grave of one who had loved him and tended him, as no other human being would do, in the little churchyard, where the white tombstones and crosses contrasted so strongly and beautifully with the emerald green of the turf and the darker tint of the vast ancient yew that overshadowed them.

In all the wide earth—the earth of which he had, as yet, so little conception, there was already no spot so dear to little Derval as the turf that covered his mother's grave ; and thus in the darkness of the moonless nights he was wont to waken and weep when he

heard the cold wind sighing and the rain falling ; and he shuddered at the thought that she was out there, exposed to them both, as it seemed to his heated fancy.

Then a great terror would come over him, till he crept softly into bed beside old Patty Fripp.

So the first heart-piercing days of sorrow and unavailing regret began to pass away, and the old craving after wealth, the world, and mammon began to resume its sway in the mind of Greville Hampton, and the dreams of which we have spoken came to his fancy again.

He began to think of Mary with more composure, and could hear, in silence, Mr. Asperges Laud, when urged by him, gently and sweetly, to remember that she had only faded out, as the stars fade, to shine again ; had died as the flowers die in autumn, for resurrection in a brighter summer, in which he should meet her again, and there should be neither sorrow nor parting. All this sounded and seemed too remote and vague for the ache, the bitter void made by her departure. Yet though Mr. Laud knew by experience that Father Time was a great consoler, there was another nearer at hand than his Reverence had quite reckoned on.

Over the life of little Derval there was now a change, which he felt, though did not quite understand. The loss of his mother he had become accustomed to ; but somehow, though there seemed plenty of happiness in the world,

it never came to him. Other children whom he saw, or met at Mr. Laud's classes, seemed all well fed, neatly clad, and joyous, for they had come thither with mothers' kisses on their rosy cheeks, and the same caresses awaited them when they went home; but he had no one to kiss him now, save old Patty Fripp, who, like a genuine maid-of-all-work, was seldom without a smudge on one side of her nose.

Papa seemed for ever absent, for, as the months ran on, he seemed to have found some mysterious occupation elsewhere than at Finglecombe.

There was a time when Greville Hampton used to steal to the bedside of his little boy, and hang over him in his sleep, parting the thick curly hair from his forehead, softly and tenderly, while remarking with fondness, that there still he could see Mary's long eyelashes, Mary's brow and pure sweet profile, and all the loving memory of her would gush up in his heart.

Observant Patty thought that he was wont to do this less and less now, while his absences from the lonely cottage became more frequent and long. She marvelled much at this. Had he fallen in with some schemes by which to amend his shattered fortune—the schemes on which she had again and again heard him descant in times past? But whatever caused the change in his habits and bearing, it was soon to be made apparent to her now.

Patty was startled from her usual propriety, or the even tenor of her way, when Greville Hampton, with some reluctance or hesitation in his manner, as if conscious of the speculation he would excite, announced that three guests were coming to dinner on a certain day; and thereupon great bustle ensued at the cottage of Finglecombe, whither the railway van brought various wines, fruits, and condiments, "even to the last grapes and first cucumbers of the season," as Patty Fripp said, for the expected guests; and Patty had to obtain the aid of a neighbour as a helping hand, and the united wonder and excitement culminated, when two of the guests arrived in a handsome and well-appointed brougham, and proved to be ladies—an old and a young one—a Mrs. Rookleigh (of whom Patty had never heard) and her niece, whom, with all her beauty, she mentally deemed to be hard, bold, and haughty.

It is a strange but true assertion, that anxiety, like misfortune, can lend misgiving and fear to any unwonted occurrence, and now Patty Fripp, for the little boy's sake, began to apprehend—she scarcely knew what!

"When I'm 'urried I'm flurried," said she to her gossip, "and look you, it ain't easy to get this place, a cottage though it be, ready by myself—to sort rooms and toilet-tables, kill chickens and dress 'em, and bake cakes, look you, like the king as burned 'em, lay tables, and all that sort o' thing!"

Mr. Hampton received his guests with great *empressement*, welcomed them to Finglecombe, with the beautiful surroundings of which they were greatly delighted, and—as Patty’s watchful and wondering eyes were upon him—he was not sorry when the Curate arrived, and he desired her to conduct the ladies to a room, and assist them to remove the costumes they had driven in.

About the elder lady there was so little to remark that Patty scarcely noticed her, but her niece, Miss Anne Rookleigh, then nearer her thirtieth than her twentieth year, was brilliantly fair in complexion, with large and languishing eyes of that golden-hazel colour which so often goes with a duplicity of character, a magnificent figure, and masses of light chesnut coloured hair. Save that her bearing and expression were hard and cold, despite the languor in her eyes, the most severe connoisseur in female beauty could have found no fault with her, unless his glance fell upon her hands, which, for a lady so generally refined in aspect, were decidedly large and even coarse-looking.

Since his mother had been borne away—it seemed so long ago now—in that grim funeral car with its black plumes, no ladies had ever been under their roof, till these two came, and now to Derval it seemed that his papa was far less gloomy than he had been—indeed, was quite gay; one of these ladies, Derval thought, eyed him curiously, even hostilely through her gold glass, and he,

grasping the while his top and whip, looked steadily up in her proud face with a reconnoitring gaze that piqued her.

The dinner passed over like any other. Greville Hampton was scrupulously attentive to both aunt and niece, but was so delicate and guarded in his manner, that Patty, who knew not the language of the eyes, could, as yet, obtain no clue to her suspicions; but, for the first time in his short life, the child was conscious of a something undefinable, he knew not what, in the manner of his father to himself, and felt that if the former did not quite repel his advances and wished-for caresses, he failed completely to respond to them, while under the golden hazel eyes of Miss Anne Rookleigh.

Derval then drew to the side of her aunt, who was intently conversing with Mr. Asperges Laud, and whom he utterly failed to interest, on the subject of his pet canary, and the big Dorking hen, that had been mamma's, and laid so many eggs.

At last the ladies rose, and quitting the table resolved to seek the garden, leaving their host and the curate to their wine and cigars.

"You have a piano here, Greville," said Miss Rookleigh with a bright smile.

"It is locked," said he uneasily.

"But there is a key, of course?"

"I have lost it," said he evasively; for the piano had been Mary's, and he could not yet have a stranger's fingers running over the



keys where *hers* had brought forth the familiar notes.

So the ladies swept forth into the little garden, where they found a rustic chair under the shadow of a golden laburnham tree, and where the roses that Mary's hands had tended were now in all the beauty and luxuriance of midsummer; and ere long, Patty Fripp, who was not above eaves-dropping, while collecting fresh salad for supper, and unobserved was close by listening to all the two visitors said, obtained a clue to the whole matter.

In fact, Greville Hampton, the widower, was engaged to Miss Anne Rookleigh!

"Yes," said the latter, leisurely fanning herself, "that child of his will be a great bore!"

"A greater bore if you have any little ones of your own," said the aunt, laughing; "but don't begin with this spirit in your breast, Anne—take care."

"Take care of what?" asked the niece, haughtily.

"I mean of abusing the great power you so evidently possess over your intended."

"I little thought, aunt, when I was only amusing myself with him at Ilfracombe, rambling among the Tors, sketching the Lover's Leap, talking, playing chess with him, singing to him, accepting his flowers and all that, I would come to love him as I do, and end at last by finding this engagement ring on my finger!"

("So-so!" muttered Patty, under her breath,

with a vicious sniff; "my old gossip was right—men don't break their hearts and die of love—for their wives at all events, look you!"

"Yes, I love him for himself alone," resumed Miss Rookleigh, after a pause, "not his fortune certainly," she added with a mocking laugh; "he is so handsome and winning. But I know, aunt, that though you are a widow, you deem it impossible that there can be any romance in a second marriage; and yet in such, a man may learn that his first was a mistake, and that now he only loves for the *first* time," and with a dreamy smile in her bright hazel eyes she swayed her fan to and fro.

"No one looks for romance in a second marriage—at least, I should not," replied her practical aunt; "I have always deemed them, like most first marriages, matters of convenience or of calculation, now-a-days. At all events you must admit, Anne, that all freshness of the heart must be gone?"

"Aunt, you are very unpleasant! I believe a man is quite capable of loving twice, and the second time more than the first; because he must know his own mind better. If I thought that Greville had only the shadow of love to offer me—but I shall not canvas the idea! Greville's first marriage must seem like a dream to him now, and, if otherwise, it will go hard with me if I do not soon obliterate all memory of a former affection. He married his first wife for her beauty, I

believe; but she was a poor namby-pamby little thing. He'll soon forget her, nay, he must have forgotten her now!" And a flash came into her eyes, of subtle colour, as she spoke.

"Hush, Anne, how would you like to be spoken of thus? Besides, his child—*her* child—will be a perpetual reminder."

"It is aggravating! I believe the little brat already views me as an interloper; and though I knew his age, he is on a larger scale than I expected, and certainly looks old for the child of a man so youthful as Greville; and then he speaks with the odious Devonshire patois!"

"One lucky thing is that your engagement will not be a long one, if you are satisfied for the time with this poor—though certainly pretty—place."

"It satisfied *her*," thought Patty, glancing at the distant spire, the shadow of which was falling on Mary's grave; and the old woman crept away, as she had heard more than enough, muttering, "after all these years I'd give him warning this very hour, but for the sake of the child. Poor Derval! from this day, I fear me, his life will be a blighted one! Dear, dear! but the master has soon begun to sweeten the hay again!" she added, referring to an old Cornish practice common among lovers in haymaking time.

So barely a year had elapsed, since the woman who clung to him so tenderly and truly in poverty, as in wealth, and whose heart had been for years against his own, had

been laid in the silent grave, when Greville Hampton brought another—but not a fairer—wife to share his cottage home.

That home he had spared no expense his means permitted to decorate for the new idol, who had certainly *not* come to him undowered. Many old and familiar objects had been removed—there were cogent reasons why—and gave place to newer fancies.

While Derval and Patty had been the sole occupants of the cottage at Finglecombe, the wedded pair had been spending their honeymoon on the continent; they had seen Antwerp with its cathedral and the art treasures of its galleries; Cologne and Coblenz, the precipitous Rolandseck with its baronial ruin and mouldering arch; hill-encircled Ems, the banks of the picturesque Lake, wooded Nassau and merry Wiesbaden; Greville the while judiciously silent that he had gone all that bridal tour once *before*. But now he thoroughly believed in his second election; and it has been said that, at few times, or at no time, of his life, is a man such a true believer in faith and love as when he plunges into matrimony, and we must suppose that it was so with Greville Hampton.

The arrival of the bride at Finglecombe, with all her boxes and that “particular baggage,” as Patty thought, her own maid, was a source of sore worry to the former, who could no longer pursue the even tenor of her way under the new state of things.

Greville kissed his little boy, who clung

fondly to him ; but the bride gave the latter her gloved hand coldly, and scanned him through her glass, while he eyed her with mistrust and wonder, and with a strange shrinking, for somehow her eye chilled him, and thus, at the very home-coming there was a petty *contretemps*.

"Kiss him, Anne dearest," said Greville ;  
"go and be kissed by your mamma, Derval."

"She is not my mamma," said the child recoiling.

"Go and be kissed by her instantly, sir ! "

"I won't, Papa."

"Then leave the room, sir ! "

"He gives me a cold reception, certainly," said Mrs. Hampton, her golden-coloured eyes sparkling dangerously under their rather white lashes, as she threw off some of her travelling wraps and appeared to Patty's wondering eyes in a rich and handsome dress, that accorded well with the stately character of her beauty ; and Derval slunk away, doubtful and fearing, whether he had done right or wrong ; but then, what did papa mean by calling this strange woman *his* mamma ?

"His presence shall not annoy you, Anne."

"But, until he gets accustomed to me, Greville ? "

"I shall compel him to stay in his own room, or in the kitchen with Patty, till he knows how to treat you."

So on this day the troubles of Derval really began. He felt that he could never be even confident in the presence of this stranger who

had so suddenly taken a high place in their little household. There was everything in her manner and bearing to repel him, and when she spoke to him his large eyes dilated under her stony gaze, as those of a bird are said to do when a serpent begins its charm of fear; and when rated for some trifle, he said sullenly:

"I want my own mamma. Why did papa bring *you* here, and set you in *her* place at table?"

"Dare you say so; you are a very bold child!" she exclaimed with some heat, and in her hard constrained voice, when a more generous woman would have smiled and resorted to caresses; "you ought to learn to love me."

"Never!" said the chubby Derval stoutly; "I shall only love my own mamma; she allowed me to climb on papa's knee and kiss him, but you won't."

"This brat, Derval," she thought, "must certainly remind him of that woman he loved, or fancied he loved, in the days of his youth and folly! Derval must be sent from this—out of this, somehow—anyhow! I would that he were old enough to go to sea."

To sea! Was his future shadowed forth in this idea?

Time will show

And already she began to hate the child, all the more that her husband in his dreams—for he was as great a dreamer as ever—more than once, in her hearing, muttered or

whispered to himself, softly and sadly, as to one near him, the name of "Mary," when doubtless the present was forgotten, and the days of the past came back in the visions of the night.

"He is thinking of his boyish fancies and his wax doll," Anne would mutter; "how shall I have patience to endure this if it occurs often?"

Tall, proud, haughty, and imperious in her secret nature, she was in all things the reverse of the *mignonne*, gentle and affectionate "wax doll," she thought of so contemptuously.

The poor for miles around felt a change now. Mary had ever but little to spare from her own slender store, and that little was given freely with kind words to all; yet the new bride that had come to Finglecombe, though wealthier far than ever poor Mary hoped to be, even amid all Greville's brilliant schemes and aspirations, gave not a crumb of broken victuals to the passing mendicant; and as for the sick and needy in the adjacent lanes, and little cob-villages, she knew not of their existence.

She had brought him a round sum of money, which, perhaps, more than even her beauty and unmistakable advances, had lured Greville Hampton into this second alliance; and with this he had speedily begun to speculate successfully in the purchase of land at Finglecombe, and to see, in prospect, the possible realisation of his golden dreams!

Had anyone ventured to hint to Greville

Hampton that he had now forgotten Mary, he would have repelled the accusation with anger. But he had been lonely—he felt the want of companionship; this woman was handsome, and had been bent on winning him, for he was possessed of much manly beauty, with a fine presence; and the dowry she had, roused in him anew that craving thirst, that eager longing for “the gold that perisheth.”

But in her love for him, and jealousy of the dead, she was somewhat exacting, and tried him considerably at times.

“You loved your first wife, of course, Greville, because it is your nature to be tender and loving,” said she on one occasion; “but do, please, put her portrait away.”

“Why, Anne?”

“Because the eyes of it seem to follow me everywhere, to watch me; and I can never see it without thinking—thinking—”

“Of what?”

“That she was as dear to you, perhaps—as near to you, certainly—as I am.”

“Your ideas are foolish, Anne,” said he; but the portrait was removed eventually, and one of her aunt, Mrs. Rookleigh, took its place.

Sometimes she went further than this, and would test his veracity a little unwarrantably, in her inordinate vanity, and with ineffably bad taste.

“Tell me, dearest Greville,” she said, hanging over him, and caressing him with



great *empressement*, "did you ever love before as you love me now?"

He smoked his old briar-root, but made no reply.

"Tell me—tell me," she persisted, while playfully pulling his ear; but his heart felt a pang, and his eye wandered involuntarily to where poor Mary's portrait used to hang.

"Why so inquisitive?" said he; "you know that I was married before. Do you think I am so vile as to marry without loving?"

"That is no answer. But were you ever so much in love as you are now?"

Wishing to evade the inquiry, he smoked rather doggedly on; so she questioned him again.

"Some fellows are in love a score of times, with every pretty girl they meet, in fact," said he.

"But you, Greville, are not one of those men."

"No, Anne, most certainly not."

So she could extract no more from him. He was weak in her hands, but to have said what she wished, he felt would be coarse treason to the dead, and thought, "why could she not be content?"

And when she sang—but in a style Mary never sang—she indulged in high fantastic flourishes, running her hands heavily over the same keys that Mary's pretty fingers had been wont to touch so lightly. For a time Greville Hampton winced at the familiar sound of the instrument, as if a spirit was conjured up

by it; but ere long he became hardened—accustomed to it.

Soon her piano, almost every immediate relic of Mary, disappeared; and times there were when her successor spoke—but never in Greville's hearing—of her memory in a sneering manner, that stung the sensitive Derval, and as he grew older, maddened and infuriated him. However, he was but a child yet, and barely understood the tithe of what she said.

To her he was a perpetual eyesore; and in the round of her daily life—especially in the absence of Greville—she found a hundred petty means of venting her groundless dislike upon him.

“Get out of the way—leave the room, boy—go and play in the garden—you are not wanted here!” Such were hourly the greetings to the child now—no kisses, no caresses as of old. All his sweet childish impulses were crushed or checked, and thrust back upon himself, and distrust and dislike of her, the typical rather than the real stepmother (fortunately for humanity's sake), grew strong in his heart—his little yearning heart, that felt half broken at times by neglect, for he had no one now, save old Patty, to whom he could tell all the wondrous secrets, and deep, tender confidences of child-life.

And even Patty he might not have long, as in Mrs. Hampton's mind she contrasted unfavourably with her own maid; she deemed her *gauche*, for Patty was a stout, broad, and

short-necked woman, with a clumsy gait, a ruddy complexion, red sandy hair, eyes rather green than grey, and with a resolute mouth and chin that came of her Cornish blood.

"Poor little Master Derval, poor darling!" said Patty once to Greville. "She has never said a kind word to him since she came to the house; and look you, sir, he would think she was mocking him if she said one now—yah!" and she ground her teeth.

"Silence, Patty; I cannot permit you to speak thus of Mrs. Hampton," said he angrily.

"Missus Hampton, indeed!" grumbled Patty, but under her breath, however. But one day Greville overheard a remark which gave him a pang.

"Derval, where are you going, sir?" demanded Mrs. Hampton imperiously, as he was taking his little cap.

"To the sea-shore," he answered shyly.

"Again? You are never anywhere else, and always come back with wet and sandy shoes. What takes you there?"

"I like to watch the waves come in, and listen to what they are saying."

"You are a little fool; I say you shall not go!" and seizing him with hands, which we have said were not small ones, she shook him violently, and tears sprang to his eyes.

"Oh," he wailed, "that my own mamma would come out of the ground, and help her little boy!"

"Ah, but your mamma can't," she said

spitefully; "she is deep enough down, thank Heaven!"

"Hush, Anne," said Greville, suddenly appearing; "for Heaven's sake don't speak to the child in that manner."

"He aggravates me so!" she replied, colouring; but more with anger than shame.

"Oh, I do beg your pardon," said Derval one day, approaching in great tribulation, with his little hands pressed tremblingly together.

"For what?" she asked sharply.

"Please, I have broken your little china vase."

"The vase that dear Aunt Rookleigh gave me! Oh you clumsy, obnoxious brat!" she exclaimed, while her eyes gleamed with anger; and as no one was near she punished him severely.

"Mother, mother! mamma, mamma!" he cried, panting in her grasp, "oh, come back to your little boy, and save him from this terrible woman!"

"Woman, indeed, you fractious imp; I'll teach you what your mamma, as you call her, never did—manners!" and she continued to beat him till he, and herself, were quite breathless, and then she flung him in a heap into a corner, to sob himself into sullen composure.

In the lust of her cruelty she, by the pursuance of a system all her own, succeeded in actually weaning much of the regard of his father from him, and had him excluded from the dining-room when dessert—to which

he had always been admitted—was on the table.

Banishment from dessert seemed to Derval the acme of ill-usage ; and, apart from the loss of the good things thereat, he never forgot the day he found himself thus banished.

He had come into the room when he knew “papa was there,” and rushed, breathless and laughing, up to his side.

“My chair is not put in for me, papa !” he exclaimed, “why is this ?”

Seizing one, he began to drag it across the room towards the table, and to his father’s side. Mrs. Hampton looked at him darkly (she was rather an Epicurean and did not like to be worried at meals), and Greville did so silently and uneasily, for he was not unmoved just then by the tender and pleading expression he read in the child’s eyes.

“I thought you said, my dear, that we were not to be disturbed in this way by that *gauche* boy ?” said Mrs. Hampton ; “and you know the nervous condition to which he reduces me—just now, at least.”

“Leave the room, Derval ; mamma does not want you to-day.”

“Oh, papa, you are not angry with me ?”

“Yes—no—but go ; you are a bad boy to insist on coming to table.”

And so Derval never sat at that table again till the day came when he was to leave the house for ever.

As he was peremptorily forbidden to go near the sea-shore, he frequently went to the

churchyard of Finglecombe and spent hours there, weaving chaplets of daisies and wild flowers.

"What brings you here so often, my poor child?" asked Mr. Asperges Laud (patting him on the head) the curate, in his long-tailed coat, gaiters, and Roman collarino.

"To be near mamma's grave," said Derval, gulping down a sob. "Besides, it is a quiet place for a good cry," he added, as the kind curate took him into his little thatched parsonage.

In the dark nights of winter he could recal how tenderly mamma put him to bed, and watched beside him till he slept. It was old Patty Fripp who did so now, who tucked him cosily into his little crib and kissed him some twenty times ere she bade him "good-night," but, by order of Mrs. Hampton, was not permitted to linger beside him.

"The child tells you, ma'm, that he can't sleep in the dark alone, from fear," urged Patty on one occasion.

"Fear of what?" she asked curtly.

"The Long Cripples."

"What *do* you mean?"

Patty then told her that snakes in Devonshire were called "long cripples," and Derval had heard of the one at Manaton, that was as big as a human body, and had legs as well as wings, and uttered a hiss that could be heard for miles around.

"The boy is a fool, and you are another; leave him to sleep, or wake, as he chooses,"

was the mandate. So Derval was left to sob himself asleep in the dark, cowering under his coverlet, fearing "the Long Cripple" was coming when the wind moaned in the chimney, or the ivy-leaves pattered on the window-panes.

Apart from the comments of Patty, the remarks of schoolfellows and neighbours were not wanting to foster the growing animosity of Derval to his stepmother. Curious eyes watched him, and the inquisitive questioned him, extracting answers, to which they gave suggestions all calculated to inflame his impotent wrath; and now a day came when the cottage at Finglecombe was turned topsyturvy, and Derval, to his utter bewilderment, was banished for some time to the parsonage.

The real Lord of Finglecombe had come in the shape of a baby-brother to him—a baby whom the Rev. Asperges Laud made a little Christian by the name of Rookleigh Greville Hampton.

And now, more than ever, as this little one had come, did the father bless his increasing prospects in the acquisition of land, and in the profits thereon, as, like the man in the *Canterbury Tales*, "therefore loved he gold in special."

New hopes sprang up in the heart of Greville, and with the wealth he seemed likely to acquire, he ceased to regret that which he had lost, and to repine about the title of which his father and grandsire had been, as he believed, illegally deprived.

But in the years to come this baby-brother was fated to have a terrible and calamitous influence upon the destiny of Derval Hampton.

Greville Hampton was so successful in his speculations that he actually hoped, in time, to make quite an estate of Finglecombe. Money makes money, and thus he became a wealthy man ; for true it is, " that the thing we look forward to often comes to pass, but never in the way we have imagined it."

His dreams of an El Dorado, and Mary's reading thereof, came back to his memory, when he saw house after house being built in the little dell that overlooked the sea ; and he recalled her words, " Your riches lie, not in California, but *here* in Finglecombe." How prophetic were her words !

Now that he was becoming wealthy, many persons who had held somewhat aloof from him began to discover a hundred good qualities in him they had never dreamed of before. Ladies had always admitted that he was a more than ordinarily handsome man ; their husbands—county men—praised his seat on horseback, his manner and bearing, remarked the cheerfulness and good nature expressed in his face, and began to extol the great frankness of his manner, though, sooth to say, they saw little of him ; for he, remembering how they had ignored his existence in the past, ignored theirs in the present time.

He steadily added acre to acre. A small, but pretty village, approaching the dignity of



a watering-place, had sprung up in the lovely dell where the little cottage of Finglecombe stood, for it had now given place to an imposing brick villa, which seemed to look haughtily down on the humbler dwellings around, with its plate-glass oriels, ogee gables, its handsome oaken porch of fanciful design, and its sweeping approaches, rolled and gravelled between beautiful shrubberies.

As wealth flowed in and brought back wonted luxuries with it, he ceased to remember poor Mary's pathetic attempts at a little ornament and refinement amid the humility of her later surroundings, for Greville Hampton became a sorely changed man to all, and to Derval especially.

Could Mary have dreamed that a day would ever come when her child would pine for his father's love, as Derval pined in secret? But under the cruel influence of the second wife and her little boy it was so. Much of this, perhaps, arose from Hampton's absorption in his own pursuits, so fearful was he of losing any time that might add to his increasing store. Thus no word of endearment, of praise for studious conduct, no caress cheered the lonely little boy, who saw all such as his father could spare exacted by Mrs. Hampton for his baby-brother, while her petty tyranny and aversion to himself grew daily together, and a woman so petty, weak-minded, and jealous—jealous even of the dead—found much to inflict in the round of home life.

Once, during a protracted absence of his father—not that his presence perhaps would have mattered much—his little pet dog was taken from him, and sent away he knew not where, and when he wept and clamoured for it, she beat him and pulled his ears till his head ached. On another occasion she deprived him of his canary, as its seed and chickweed “made a mess”; and then he felt—as when she sent “mamma’s big Dorking” to the spit—something like murder in his little heart.

He rushed at her and contrived to inflict sundry kicks about her ankles, which made her scream, and in a moment the strong and athletic hand of his father was upon him.

“Ask instant pardon of your mamma, sir!” was the command.

“I won’t—she is not my mamma.”

“I tell you, sir, she is,” and the blows fell like a hailstorm about the head and shoulders of Derval. But not a tear came from his eyes now; his lips were firmly compressed, his face was deadly pale, and he regarded his father with a steady and unflinching eye.

“Go to your room, sir, and remain there till you are sent for.”

Under this unjust treatment the boy became sullen and resentful; thus, when a little pool he had constructed in the garden, to hold a shoal of minnows, by her order was emptied and filled up, he revenged himself by poodling

her favourite Persian cat, the gift of her aunt, Mrs. Rookleigh, and for this she resolved to inflict condign punishment, with great form and ceremony.

She armed herself with her riding switch (for Greville now kept a pretty pad for her) and desired the groom to bring Master Derval to the stable, and as she did so, in her silly malignity, her very handsome face had a very tiger-like expression, and she grasped the jewelled handle of the switch resolutely in her large white hand.

"Lock the door on the inside," said she when Derval was brought before her. "Off with his jacket and tie up his hands to the knob on that heelpost."

And almost before Derval could realise the situation, he found himself a prisoner, denuded of his jacket, a halter-rope looped round his wrists, and himself "seized up," for deliberate punishment, standing almost on tip-toe, and with considerable tension.

"Will that do, mum?" asked the groom, who thought the situation an amusing one, "a rum start," as he afterwards said in the kitchen, adding that he never thought so "handsome a lady could be so downright savage."

Derval turned his head half round with an appealing expression on his sweet boyish face—a look that reminded her of the expression of Mary's eyes in her banished portrait,—but at that instant she swung the elastic switch

round, and it fell with a smart and stinging thud upon his shoulders, which had no protection now save his little shirt. Derval winced, but set his teeth firmly together, determined to die rather than give her the satisfaction of hearing him cry out or supplicate for mercy.

With steady and regular sweep the switch descended on Derval's quivering shoulders again and again; but not a cry escaped him, and enraged anew by his fortitude, or "obstinacy," as she deemed it, Mrs. Hampton exerted herself afresh, and Derval, while clenching his teeth and breathing hard, boy-like, thought of the cruel enchantress who used to whip the bare back of the helpless young king of the Black Isles in the *Arabian Nights*, and longed for some such punishment to fall on his tormentor as fell on that remarkable lady.

We know not how many strokes were administered, but Mrs. Hampton was becoming somewhat breathless, and the tension of the rope that bound her victim to the heelpost seemed as if dragging his arms out of their sockets.

"Do stop, please mum, the little lad is fainting," exclaimed the groom.

"Nonsense, he is shamming, he is as cunning as a fox!" she exclaimed; but it was as the groom said, for Derval's head drooped on his breast and he hung on the rope like a dead weight, while no motion was made by him.

"Untie him; dear me, I had no idea of this," said Mrs. Hampton, becoming suddenly alarmed, while the groom released the passive hands of Derval, and tenderly carried him into the stable-yard, where the fresh air fanned his face, which was now bathed with cold water from a fountain into which Mrs. Hampton dipped her cambric handkerchief.

"He will revive in a few minutes," said she, becoming certainly still more alarmed at the pallor of his face and seeing that his eyes remained closed.

"Lord, mum," said the groom, who rather enjoyed her growing terror, "I hope we won't be having a crowner's 'quest in the house!"

"Fool!" said she, darting an angry look at the speaker, and then applying her little bottle of aromatic vinegar to Derval's nostrils. He revived, however, rapidly, put his jacket on, and walked sullenly but unsteadily away.

For the first time in her life she feared her husband—was glad of his absence, and hoped that Derval's back, which she anointed when he was sound asleep, would bear no trace of what he had undergone when Greville Hampton returned.

"Flogged like a black nigger for poodling a dirty cat—my eyes!" was the comment of the groom, when relating the episode in the kitchen; and poor old Patty Fripp wept tears of rage when she heard of it.

Derval's back was still stiff and painful,

and his tender wrists were excoriated, when his father returned a day or two after, but the idea of complaining about what he had undergone never occurred to him; in fact, he was too much accustomed to systematic ill-usage now.

He longed to be old enough to run away and be a soldier or a sailor—he cared not which—and he would sit by his mother's grave brooding over such thoughts, till led away by Mr. Asperges Laud, or found by Patty Fripp.

As he grew older he became painfully conscious, however, of the different treatment of his younger brother and himself; he saw how he was permitted to go threadbare and shabby, with tattered cap and seamy boots, while little Rookleigh—or Rook as he called him—was kept like a princeling in purple and fine linen, and all the while their father seemed careless or oblivious of the difference.

“I'll not stay here, Patty,” said Derval one day in great soreness of heart, while smarting under some new affront; “I'll run away.”

“Run away, child, and let the Pixies or the Long Cripple get thee!” exclaimed his old nurse.

But Derval had nearly ceased to fear these things now, and he had no dread of any created thing, though he did shrink from the malice and the severe and vindictive eyes of his stepmother, and from contending with the low forces of her small and narrow mind.

Had Greville Hampton shown more, or even any remarkable preference for his first-born than for little Rookleigh, there might have been some reason for her jealousy though none for her cruelty; but so absorbed was he, as we have said, in the novel and pleasant task of money-making, that he never gave a thought at all to Derval.

As the latter approached boyhood, and Rookleigh childhood from mere infancy, the continued difference in the treatment of both, in food, raiment, and even in toys, was perceptible to all. Derval shunned alike the dining-room and drawing-room, for *she* was sure to be in either one or other. He lurked in the stable, the gardens, on the sea-shore, anywhere to be away from her, and his father never missed him apparently.

Rookleigh, petted, master, and more than master of the establishment, grew up a froward, petulant, sullen and cunning child—a greedy one too, who ate his cakes and sweetmeats in secrecy and haste, sharing none and nothing with his elder brother or anyone else; and in many ways, as her own peculiar rearing, he was becoming the counterpart of his mother.

Again and again had the latter hinted at sending Derval away somewhere, to board or be bound apprentice, she cared not to what; but time passed on, till he attained his fourteenth year, and his half-brother was seven years old, with his mother's chestnut hair and her cunning yellow-hazel eyes, but with a strange shifty expression in them.

At home in his father's house, Derval was beginning to feel homeless now. Though impulsive and enthusiastic, what to him were now the leafy rustle of the woods and apple-orchards of Finglecombe ; the trill of the lark above his head, the white-flecked azure of the summer sky, the cornfields ripe for the sickle, the glare of the golden sunshine, the soft curve of the distant hills, the bold rocky coast of Devon, and the sea that lapped it ?

He only longed to be far away from them all and from "that woman," for Finglecombe was no longer home to him ; no welcome was there, and love had departed.

Often did the boy visit the ruins of the old castle of Oakhampton, and wander there, as he had been wont to do in happier times, when led by his father's hand, longing to be the lord of it, or of some such place—but of it more than all. For he had been told it was theirs by right, and the coat of arms above the mouldering portal, the shield with its three choughs, and the motto *Clarior e Tenebris*, was theirs also.

The grim stone vaults, the dimly-lighted chamber, the roofless hall, he peopled in imagination with mail-clad soldiers, their pikes glittering and banners waving, as his mind filled with feudal fancies and monastic longings, and he loved the old walls, which had been the cradle of his race, especially when they, and the masses of dark-green ivy that clothed them, were steeped in the redness of the setting sun, and the gathering shadows



of evening added to their melancholy, their stillness, and gloom.

He felt his heart swell with romance and pride, as he recalled all his father and even Patty Fripp had told him of the Hamptons of other days, and of the rights he had lost, and bold and daring were the fancies that filled the mind of the brave boy at times, for he was now at the age when all life is illusion.

The sea-shore was his other favourite resort, and he spent hours there listening to the lap, lapping of the waves upon the shingle, and marvelling of other lands that were far, far away; and there was one morning, the excitement of which he never forgot, when a nameless and unknown wreck was found floating in the bay, a mastless and battered hulk—battered by the fury of some great storm, in which the water had contended with the spirits of the air, till all on board had perished.

Another haunt was a ruined and unused mill at Mill-brook, where the old wheel, covered with green moss and grey lichens, looked so picturesque, while the brook foamed and boiled unheeded beneath it, and some ancient trees with drooping branches cast a shadow over the ivied walls, where all, so busy once, was now silent, and made up a picture of which Derval never wearied in his childish rambles, though the pixies were said to grind their corn there at night, when the old wheel, so silent and still by day, was seen revolving furiously in the light of the moon.

Thus, a strange and shadowy expression—induced by his loneliness—began to come into the boy's eyes, as if he had thoughts no one understood, or cared to understand, and as if by day he dreamed of things unthought of by others. Mr. Asperges Laud saw all this in his face, and longed to see the little lad away from Finglecombe and its influence, and the wish was likely to be soon gratified.

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## CHAPTER III.

## ON BOARD THE GOOD SHIP "AMETHYST."

At last there comes a crisis in the affairs of Derval Hampton.

"How often am I to urge that this boy of yours should be sent to a boarding school or—to sea, dearest Greville," he heard his step-mother say decisively, but in a suave manner she was cunning enough to adopt with his father, when she had some important end in view, just as he took his seat at a side-table for breakfast to which he had been permanently banished, while little Rookleigh perched in a baby-chair (held in by a cross-bar) sat by his mamma's side and got tiny bits of the best of everything from her own hands.

As her husband made no immediate reply, but sat immersed in the "money article" of the *Times*, she repeated her observation or suggestion in a louder key, when he said,

"Why, Anne?"

"Because I cannot have him at home here any longer, and what is more, dear Greville, I shall not!"

"You will not?" said he, laying down his paper, while Derval listened with a quick-beating heart.

"Once and for all—no."

"I ask again, why?"

"He is so unfinished—worse—unmannerly—a mere Devonshire lout, I am sorry to say, and will corrupt my darling little Rookleigh if they grow up together."

"Say *ours*, Anne."

"Well, ours, of course, darling."

"I cannot see that poor Derval is all you say."

"But I do, and to sea let him go; we can't have him growing up to manhood an idle, hulking fellow here."

"Everyone thinks Derval a very well-bred boy, and Mr. Asperges says he is the best behaved of all his choir."

"He poodled the cat, however, steals the fruit and the jam, and is so full of tricks and strange eccentric ways, that he should be permanently banished to the kitchen," continued Mrs. Hampton, forgetting her suavity and warming up with her subject; "but here is the very thing we want!" she exclaimed, turning to an advertisement in the *Times*, as if her eye had only caught it for the *first* time.

"*The Sea*.—Introduction given—free of all charge—to one of the oldest ship-owning firms in the city requiring respectable youths on board of three splendid ships just launched, for the West Indian and Colonial trades.

Midshipman's uniform worn. Apply, Dugald Curry & Co." &c. "I think you should lose no time in writing, love," she added coaxingly.

"Would you like this, Derval?" asked Greville Hampton, with a little softer cadence in his voice than usual.

Of course he liked it; and a great flush of happiness and longing rose up in his heart, the ideas of the "splendid ship" and "middy's uniform," combined with a young Briton's in-born tastes and visions of the sea—the sea, with its perils, glories, and wonders; of Robinson Crusoe, and lonely isles full of fruits and flowers and coral caves, of gold to find and savages to fight—now filled the whole mind of Derval; and all that the lives of adventurous voyagers and intrepid seamen—all that the stories contained in naval history and the novels of Marryat and others have sown in the souls of our schoolboys, were there to rouse his native enthusiasm.

So the matter was soon accomplished, and a correspondence with Messrs. Dugald Curry & Co. ended in Derval finding himself elected to seek his bread upon the waters as middy on board the good ship *Amethyst* of London, 700 tons register, Captain Philip Talbot commander, bound for Rio Janeiro.

From this we may fully gather that the once tender husband that loved so well the gentle Mary, and whose whole thought was the future welfare of their only child, was a sorely changed man now, under the

influence of another woman and his new surroundings.

With the removal of the picturesque little cottage of Finglecombe and the erection of a florid and pretentious villa in its place, the old life had passed away, and with it many a memory of the innocent and loving, if anxious, past. Greville Hampton had become almost callous in his worldliness; a slave to chance impulses, to gratified avarice, to feverish acquisitiveness, and the love that had whilom been absorbed by the son of Mary, was now shared, and more than shared, yea, usurped, by the younger born of Anne Rookleigh.

Derval, whom he was sending forth into the cold and bitter world so early in life, in his tender years, as a poor sailor boy, was the same son for whom, in the days of his more limited means, he had longed for wealth, and now—now when wealth was coming upon him—he could look on Anne's face, and into her false eyes of golden hazel, and thrust back the thoughts that at times reproached him.

Could it really be that he—Greville Hampton—was doing this without a necessity therefor? But true it is, that "one's memory is apt to grow rusty with respect to one's old self, and we nearly always look upon ourselves as the products of certain *causes*, setting down anything unsatisfactory to the charge of training and circumstances." Yet, as in every parting there is an image of death,

in the departure of Derval it seemed for a time to Greville Hampton as if Mary was dying again.

The day before he was to leave, Derval went alone to her grave, to read again the words—how well he knew them!—on the little cross at the head of the dear mound, and to take farewell of her, as it were—that turfy mound, to him the most hallowed spot on earth, yea, hallowed as that on which the Angel of God once alighted; and waves of feeling seemed to swell painfully up in his little heart as he turned slowly to leave the spot, for years—perhaps for ever.

Often in the lonely watches of the night, under the glory of the southern skies, or in dark and stormy hours, when the bleak wind blustered aloft and bellied out the close-reefed topsails, when giant waves came thundering from windward to wash the deck and gorge the lee-scuppers, making the stout ship reel like a toy in the perilous trough of the sea, did the sailor boy's thoughts fly back to that peaceful grave and his farewell visit there.

And now the last night came that Derval was to spend under the roof of his father, and for a time the heart of the latter really did go forth to him, the present wife was almost forgotten; dead Mary came back to his soul, and seemed to take her place again. Fain would he have gone with his boy to London, to have seen him off, or into safe hands on board his future home, but Mrs. Hampton

said no—she could not and would not be left alone just then.

How tenderly old Patty wept over her “darling’s things,” and folded them carefully and neatly for the last time, and packed his little portmanteau, yearningly as his own mother would have done, and thought truly, with a great sob, that had she lived he would not now have been “going into the world as a sailor boy.” And for that dead mother’s sake she kissed him many times, and with her old scissors snipped off a lock of his once golden curls, that were gradually turning to rich dark brown like his father’s; but Derval had the crisp hair that indicates character, firmness, and decision of purpose. As he was to depart in the early morning, he kissed and hung over his brother, “little Rook,” as he called him, whom he was not permitted to waken; and the episode of the lonely boy doing this moved the heart of his father; but Mrs. Hampton looked coldly on, for hers was hard as flint to him and cold as iron.

At last it was all over, and in the early hours of the next morning he found himself as one in a dream, in the train for London, and leaving fast behind every feature of the landscape with which he had been familiar from infancy. Already Finglecombe, with all its groves and little church tower had vanished, and now Bideford, with its wide and airy streets that shelve towards the water, came and went as the train swept on, and after that, all his wistful eyes looked on was new to him.



It was an inauspicious morning on which to begin the world, being a dull and raw one in February; the rain fell aslant the grey sky, and reedy fens and lonesome marshes, where the bittern boomed, were full of water, and the rooks were cawing in the leafless elms as they built their nests. The orchards were leafless, and the furrows in the ploughed fields were like long narrow runnels filled with water; but despite all this, the novelty of Derval's situation, a certain sense of freedom, and being the lord of his own proper person, kept up his spirits for a time.

The last hand in which his hand had lingered was that of Mr. Asperges Laud, and in fancy he seemed still to see his kind and earnest face, his Roman collarino, broad hat, and long-skirted coat, as he stood on the platform and gave a farewell wave, like a wafted blessing, after the departing train.

The railway journey was precisely like any other; he saw many places new to him, Taunton, with all its pleasant villages and beautiful orchards, and Salisbury with its wonderful spire, among others, and after a run of two hundred and twenty miles his train ran clanking into Waterloo Station. After traversing miles of streets (which he thought would never come to an end), about ten at night, and with a heart beating almost painfully with excitement, young Derval found himself in the mighty wilderness of London, and surrounded by more people than he thought the world contained, and an appalling bustle,

strange lights and sights and sounds, and where all men seemed to be engaged in a race with time and for bare existence.

By the guard who had him in charge he was taken to an hotel, excitement rendered him incapable of eating, and weary with intense thinking he went supperless to bed. Sooth to say, he felt very friendless and miserable. He dearly loved his father, despite his later abstraction and coldness, and already he was longing to see his face again, and the face, too, of Patty Fripp, who had been a mother to him. He had left home but that morning, and already ages seemed to have lapsed since then.

The thoughts of Robinson Crusoe, Captain Cook, Peter Simple, and so forth, failed now to keep up his spirits in the unutterable loneliness of his condition; already he wept for the home he had so lately quitted and loathed, and from which he had been literally driven; but he had no anger at any one there now—not even Mrs. Hampton; and folding his hands, he repeated the prayers, from which mockery was soon to make him refrain when on board the good ship *Amethyst*.

George Eliot says truly that “daylight changes the aspect of misery to us, as of everything else, for the night presses on our imagination—the forms it takes are false, fitful, exaggerated; in broad day it sickens our sense with the dreary persistence of measurable reality.”

The day that dawned was scarcely one calcu-

lated to rouse the ardour or spirits even of a lad, as it was one of the Cimmerian darkness, a London fog, when the omnibuses ceased to ply, and not even the boldest cabby would undertake to convey Derval to the West India Docks, a state of things which greatly perplexed him, as the yellow opaqueness that now surrounded him was so different from the thin white mists that came at times from the Bristol Channel.

It was one of those horrible fogs peculiar to London and to London only, when there is a doubly blinding nature in it, which puts the thrust-down smoke into a state of atmospheric solution, obscuring all things, and causes the oppressed eyes to tingle, smart, and fill with irrepressible tears, and blinds them to the dim objects that might perchance otherwise be visible ; that compels at midday, and often all day long, a vast consumption of candles and lamp oil, gas and torches, and nearly all locomotion is brought to a standstill ; when the trees and railings become white as if snowed upon, carriages are relinquished and links and lanterns resorted to at the West End, and the street perils of the East are fearfully increased, and many a vehicle is found half-wrecked by the kerb-stone ; and when the terrible poisonous smoke-fog in its descent from the very sky, as it were, penetrates houses, and makes dark and obscure, damp and comfortless, even the cosiest and brightest of rooms.

The mind is usually affected by external

circumstances. Thus, never more than now in this dark and apparently awful day, did Derval, cowering in the corner of a coffee-room, sigh in heart for the touch of the loving hand and the sound of the caressing voice that the grave had closed over for ever.

At last, as evening drew near, the tiresome fog lifted a little, and a cab was brought for him. To Derval's timidly expressed "hope that he knew the way," the bloated visage of the Jehu of the "four-wheeler" responded by a smile of half amusement, half contempt; and to the inquiry if the fog was often like this, he was told that it was "ever so, from year's end to year's end."

After traversing a mighty labyrinth of streets, narrow, dirty, and of most repellent aspect, the cabman drew up, descended, and opened the door; though aware that he had to deal with "a precious green 'un," he was actually content with thrice his legal fare, and depositing Derval at a gate of the Dock—a wilderness of kegs, masts, and ships, and all manner of strange things to him—left him with his portmanteau to find out the *Amethyst*—his future home—as best he could.

By the assistance of a good-natured porter, after great delay and trouble, he found her, and by a gangway proceeded on board in the mist and damp, unnoticed and bewildered to whom to address himself.

A prodigious noise and bustle prevailed everywhere, but to Derval's excited imagination they seemed to culminate on board the

*Amethyst.* Several black gaping hatches were open, and a mighty multitude of casks, boxes, bales, and filled sacks, were descending into them, by ropes and chains run through the blocks shipped on derricks (in spars supported by stays, and used for slinging up or lowering down goods), with a terrible creaking and rattling, amid much expenditure of breath in the way of "yo-heave-oi" by gangs of peculiarly dirty-looking fellows, with jersey-sleeves rolled up, and who looked like gipsies or vagrants, but were simply unwashed and unkempt dock-labourers and porters.

The deck and the entire ship seemed, to the lad's unprofessional eyes, a mass of irremediable confusion. The former was encumbered with casks and cases, and the mud brought from the shore by the feet of dock-people and visitors had not added to its comfort or cleanness. Everybody seemed bustling about, with some distinct object in view; but Derval stood aside with his little portmanteau and a travelling-bag, pushed to and fro by every passer, lost, bewildered, and not unfrequently sworn at.

At last he took courage to address a young man, tall, surly, and saucy in aspect, who was smoking a short pipe, but who wore a naval cap, and though he had his shirt-sleeves rolled up as if he had been at work, seemed in some authority, for Derval heard him spoken of as the third mate, and he was greatly shocked to find such an official attired thus, while superintending cargo going into the open hold.

"Please, sir," said Derval, "I have come to join the ship as a midshipman—where shall I put these things of mine?"

"Don't chuck them down here, youngster, whatever you do," was the somewhat surly response, while he gave Derval a casual yet critical glance. "You are young—young—what the devil is your name?"

"Derval Hampton, sir."

"Oh, ah—yes," replied the other, touching the peak of his cap in mockery, and for a moment taking his short pipe from his mouth. "I am Paul Bitts, the third mate; we have been looking for you for ever so long; you'll excuse the ship not being decorated to receive you."

"Certainly, sir."

"That is very good of you." I hope you left your esteemed papa and mamma very well?"

"Very well, thank you."

"A very greenhorn, by Jove!" muttered this would-be witty young gentleman. "Is your wife coming to see you off? I hope not, as I can't stand women's tears—lovely woman in distress and all that sort of thing."

"Who's this?" asked a smart-looking seaman with a fringe of curly brown whiskers, and a good-natured face—a man about forty-five—as he came forward. The new-comer had the cut of a genuine seaman, and wore his clothes as no landsman could ever wear them. His trousers were loose and

round at the feet but tight at the waist; he wore a well-varnished and low-crowned black hat, with a long blue ribbon hanging over the left eye, a black silk handkerchief peculiarly knotted round his bare brown throat, that had been tanned by the sun of many a land and sea; a jack-knife hanging by a lanyard thread was his only ornament, unless we except a clumsy gold ring, and he displayed a superabundance of check shirt. He had a wide step, a rolling gait, and half-open hands that seemed always ready to tally on to anything. "Who is this?" he repeated, eyeing Derval.

"A greenhorn—a land-crab—come with the owner's compliments," said Mr. Paul Bitts, bowing low ironically; "allow me to introduce Mr. Derval Hampton—Mr. Joe Grummet, our boatswain; Mr. Joe Grummet—Mr. Derval——"

"Stow that 'ere nonsense," said the other bluntly; "welcome aboard, my little lad, and if any man in the *Amethyst* can make a sailor of you, I am he."

'Then Joe Grummet shook Derval's hand very cordially indeed.

"Take him aft to the captain," said Mr. Bitts; "but before you go, youngster, hand over all the cakes and jam-pots the old woman at home gave you."

"I have none, and if I have, why should I give them to you?" asked Derval, beginning to resent the other's offensive tone.

"Because you might be a naughty boy

and get so sea-sick—so hand them over, and I'll find fellows to eat them for you."

"I have none, I tell you," replied Derval, with sparkling eyes; "and who do you mean by the 'old woman'?"

"Your mother, of course."

"I have—none!" replied Derval, in a changed voice that Joe Grummet was not slow to detect, and taking up Derval's portmanteau and bag, he desired him to follow, whispering as they went:

"Look 'ee, Hampton, lad, there isn't a saucier fellow in the ship than Paul Bitts, but he is senior to you, and you won't gain anything by running foul of his hawse, so give him a wide berth always."

And now, by a very handsome companion-way and mahogany stair, they descended to the cabin of the ship, which was plainly and neatly furnished, the chief features, to Derval's eyes, being a rack or two of arms and a brass tell-tale compass, that swung in the square skylight.

"Mr. Hampton—just come aboard, sir," said Joe Grummet, removing his hat; and Derval found himself kindly welcomed by Captain Talbot, a man about thirty, with a handsome open countenance, a bright cheerful expression, and a stout well-set figure, and his two other mates, Mr. Girtline and Mr. Tyeblock, who pressed him to join them in a glass of sherry and a biscuit, of which they were partaking before going on shore.

Captain Talbot questioned him kindly



about his parents and home as if to acquire his confidence and inspire him therewith; about his education, and if he had a genuine liking for the sea, or if it was only a flight of boyish fancy born of story books; but Derval, unable to tell that anywhere was better than home to him, answered with great reserve and much shyness, while sooth to say, as he had never heard of the Royal Naval Reserve, to which Captain Talbot and his two mates belonged, their costumes puzzled him very much.

They wore gold epaulettes, and half-inch gold lace in wavy lines around the cuffs, laced trousers, sword and belts like naval officers, Captain Talbot having two medals glittering on his broad chest for saving human life; and he and his two mates were now departing in "full fig," as Joe Grummet informed him, to a great entertainment given by the Lord Mayor, and ere they left the ship, the captain, who knew probably the proclivities of Mr. Paul Bitts, who was left in charge there, specially directed the boatswain to have an eye to the comforts of the new-comer.

So while showing him his berth and where to stow his things, Joe solved to him the mystery of the handsome uniforms, and fired his enthusiasm thereby. He told him that no less a personage than the Prince of Wales was at the head of the Royal Naval Reserve; that Captain Talbot had the rank of Lieutenant there, and Mr. Girtline and Mr.

Tyeblock that of sub-lieutenants among the officers, who among their number included several marquises and lords, as the *Navy List* showed; and that in consequence of the *Amethyst* having among her crew, which consisted of twenty-five all told (exclusive of officers), ten seamen of the Royal Naval Reserve (of whom he, Joe, was one), she was entitled to carry at her gaff-peak, the blue ensign of Her Majesty's fleet, prior to first hoisting of which, she was duly provided with an Admiralty warrant.

The uniform which he had now unpacked and the contemplation of six brass 9-pounders on deck, polished like jeweller's gold, with black tompions in their muzzles and canvas-covered lashings white as snow, afforded Derval as much delight as the rifles with sword-bayonets, the cutlasses and pistols that were racked round the mizenmast in the cabin and against the rudder case, for in the seas the *Amethyst* might have to traverse, were risks to be run that rendered lethal weapons necessary at times; and he longed, with all an enthusiastic lad's longing, for the day when he, like Joe Grummet and the rest, would be qualified to have his turn of drill and gunnery practice on board H.M.S. *President* in the West India Docks. And he hoped, too, that in time to come he might be captain of just such another fine and stately ship as the *Amethyst* of 700 tons register, A.1 at Lloyds, perfect in the grace of her rigging, beautiful in mould, and made for fast sailing

—for slipping through the sea “a-head of her reckoning.”

Her rigging was beautifully fitted, every rope lying in the chafe of another, her decks were flush and level, and when at sea any loose rope was neatly coiled away and laid down in a regular man-of-war fashion that came of the recent training of Joe Grummet and others on board *H.M.S. President*.

“The skipper has specially requested me to take you in tow, Mr. Hampton,” said the boatswain.

“In tow?” queried Derval.

“In charge, don’t you know; so there is one piece of advice I’ll give you, keep to windward if you can of Mr. Paul Bitts; he is often crank, and over-fond of colting the youngster, and who yaws a bit in way of doing duty.”

To this mysteriously worded advice, Derval replied that he should endeavour to please that gentleman in all things.

“The captain, of course, will take care that you are not put upon, but then he is not always at hand. He is a fine fellow, Phil Talbot, who can crack his joke and his biscuit on the same head,” continued the boatswain manipulating a quid between the hard palms of his hands prior to inserting it in the back recesses of his mouth. “Many a lunar he and I have worked together when mere ship-boys long ago—for there wer’nt no mid-dies—no reefers—in the merchant service in those days, and many who sailed with us then

have gone aloft for ever. But come lad—supper waits,” he exclaimed as a bell was heard to jingle; “a jolly British leg of mutton with caper sauce—gad boy, I have eaten capers off the bushes many a time on the shore of the Black Sea.”

At supper were Dr. Strang, the young Scotch surgeon, who in despair of a practice ashore was fain to ship as a “medico” in the *Amethyst*; and two middies, Harry or Hal Bowline, a frank fair-haired and cherry-cheeked young fellow with a confident and often defiant air; and little Tommy Titford, —usually called Tom Tit—a quiet, dark-eyed, and gentle lad about Derval’s age, and who was the peculiar object of the malevolence of Mr. Paul Bitts, then busily engaged in slicing down the mutton, of which he reserved all the best cuts for himself.

He gruffly told Derval to make haste and finish his supper, as he had a message for him to execute; and Derval, anxious to make himself useful, and also to conciliate this personage, bolted his food, and nearly choked himself with a can of ale handed to him by the good-natured boat-swain.

“Got any sisters, Hampton?” asked Bowline, who thought himself a wag.

“No,” replied Derval.

“Sorry for that; because we would have stuck their photos all over the place, and set them up to auction now and then.”

“Your message, please sir?” said Derval.

"The harbour watch is set, so go forward and send the cook's shifter to me."

"Where shall I find him?"

"In the starboard binnacle."

"Very good, sir." And Derval vanished

"He is as big a gull as ever picked up a bit of biscuit!" said Bitts with a horse-laugh in which the others joined, especially young Bowline, and after some time Derval returned looking rather tired, flushed, and confused, to say he had been all over the ship, inquired of everyone, and could find neither the person nor the place referred to, at which there was a fresh burst of laughter; for by some he had been informed that the cook's shifter had gone on shore to be married, by others that he was busy polishing the chain cable, and that the starboard binnacle was at present in the captain's hat-box, and so forth.

Many similar, and many silly jokes against which the boatswain failed to protect him, and perhaps was not disinclined to join in, were perpetrated on Derval, ere, thoroughly weary with a long and, to him, exciting day, he retired to his berth, which he thought had a moist and musty odour, and certainly its sheets had not the dried lavender and camphor scents of Patty Fripp's store presses at Finglecombe.

Betimes came the morrow with its troubles, and the tyranny of Mr. Bitts among them.

"Come youngster, tumble up," shouted that individual, "it is six bells."

"What have bells to do with me, sir?" asked Derval timidly.

"By Jingo, I'll soon let you know, through the medium of a good colt. Rouse—that is all!"

Now that gentleman was in charge of the deck, and when Derval came upon it, at 6 A.M., Bitts was again in his shirt-sleeves, and still superintending the stowage of cargo, swearing at the dock labourers, until the appearance of Derval gave a turn to his thoughts.

"On deck at last, Hampton. By Jove, you look as if you had been cooked and stewed up again!" he exclaimed; "now, away aloft and get the fresh air about you. The sooner you learn to sit astride the main cross-trees, the better for yourself."

And to Derval's dismay the speaker indicated two little spars, that looked as slender as walking-canes, resting on the trestle-trees, where the topmast and topgallantmast are connected.

"Please, sir, I cannot do that just yet," urged Derval, turning very white.

"Into the maintop then," continued the bully; "away aloft youngster, and hold on with your eyelids if your hands fail you. By Jove, you'll soon find that you are like a young bear, with all your sorrows to come! Here you, Tom Tit, show this son of a shotten herring how to mount the rigging."

In obedience to these orders the boys

began to ascend the main rattlins at once, little Titford leading the way and saying many pleasant things to give Derval courage and confidence.

"Not through the lubber's hole," shouted Paul Bitts; "up by the futtock shrouds!"

Derval knew well that the sooner he mastered all this kind of work the better for himself. He had climbed many a tall elm when seeking rooks' eggs at Finglecombe, and many a taller cliff when after those of the cormorants, choughs, and gannets; but this was very different work, even though the ship, moored beside the quay, was motionless as St. Pauls; and he thought of what this task would be at sea, in a storm perhaps, when the ship became the fulcrum of the swaying masts, and his heart stood still at the terrible anticipation; yet he mounted bravely up, step for step with young Titford, encouraged by the latter's voice, and the clapping of hard horny palms below.

But now they had reached the top of the long shrouds, to where the futtock-shrouds come down from the top and are bound to the mast by a hoop of iron.

"Up you go now—if you go through the lubber's hole, I'll be the death of you!" cried Bitts from below, for as the captain and other two mates were still on shore, he was in all the plenitude of his power.

"Hold on fast and follow me," cried little Titford, and active as a squirrel, with his body bent backward at an angle of forty-five

from the mast, he continued mounting until he found himself in the maintop—*i.e.* the platform placed over the head of the lower mast.

Panting, and perspiring at every pore, with agitation, exertion, and an emotion of no small dismay to see the deck and the men thereon seem so small and so far down below, Derval, with tingling fingers, while a prayer rose to his lips, grasped the futtock-shrouds, surmounted them as one in a dream, and found himself safe beside Titford. There came a time when this task was as easy to him as sitting down to table, but the novelty of it filled him with great alarm then, and when the descent began, despite his terror of Mr. Paul Bitts, he deliberately left the top through the lubber's hole—an aperture in the top grating—as an easier mode of progression, while Titford went down by the futtock-shrouds.

On seeing this Paul Bitts grinned with delight, and produced from his pocket a colt—a piece of rope eighteen inches long, knotted at one end and whipped at the other—which he was wont to carry for the benefit of the ship-boys.

Derval perceived this ; a spirit of mischief, caused by revulsion of feeling, rose within him, and the moment he reached the deck, all encumbered as it was by boxes, barrels, bales, and gangways, dock labourers and porters, he gave Mr. Bitts a chase that excited the laughter of all and roused the fury of that



personage, by darting hither and thither, with all a boy's agility, round the masts and hatchways till he reached the quarter-deck, at a part of which the side-netting was being repaired; consequently a portion of it was open and the moulded plankshere (a plank which runs all round the timber heads) was hinged up.

While Derval stood here irresolute, and thinking of capitulation, Bitts made a dart at him, on which the latter instantly shrank aside, and his tormentor, in his blind fury failing to perceive the gap in the bulwark, went head foremost overboard and into the water.

Amid shouts of laughter he came to the surface, black as a negro, with the filthy mud and ooze of the harbour bottom, into which he must have been wedged to the shoulders.

"Oh, my eye!" shouted Harry Bowline, who danced a few steps of a hornpipe, "here's a lark—Bitts in the water—man overboard—rope, rope! cut away the life-buoy—man a boat!"

Puffing like a grampus and half choked, the third mate scrambled on board by the mizen chains, minus his colt, and rather more than crestfallen, and while he went below to alter his costume, Derval, after paying his "footing" to the crew—their perquisites for his first going aloft—was sent into a part of the hold where a gang of men were stowing away cases, and where, as it was very dark, his duty consisted in holding a candle to show a light when required.

In an atmosphere and amid features and occupations so new and strange, perhaps Derval thought as little now of the Oakhampton title, the ruined castle, and Wistmanswood, as his father did amid his fast growing wealth; but the time might come for both to lay such matters to heart, and this the future will show.

It was somewhat of a red-letter day for Derval when he first donned his uniform—a gold-laced cap and blue Oxford jacket with gilt anchor buttons, gold anchors on the collars, and ditto lace upon the cuffs—and went on shore, bearer of a letter to Messrs. Dugald Curry & Co., and feeling indifferent to the anxious inquiries of Mr. Bitts, as to whether he thought he resembled Lord Nelson, K.C.B., whether his mamma knew he was absent from home, and at what church he was to meet his intended, and much more to the same purpose.

In time the cargo was all on board, the hatches battened down, the boats secured and inspected, the bills of lading signed—documents whereby the captain of a vessel acknowledges receipt of goods shipped on board, and binds himself (“dangers of accidents, the seas, fire, enemies, &c., excepted”) to deliver them in good order to those to whom they are addressed, on payment of the stipulated freight.

The *Amethyst* was hauled out of dock, and with the blue ensign of the Royal Naval Reserve flying at her gaff-peak, and Blue Peter

at the foremast-head, was taken by tug down the river, and came to anchor off Tilbury Fort. Next day began the bustle of preparing for sea; the canvas was fully bent, the royal yards crossed, the studding sail gear rove, the powder brought on board; and in many ways Derval made himself so active, even up aloft, that he quite won the heart of Joe Grummet.

"I knew you would drop into your place in a day or two, youngster," said he, "and you've already done it."

"When shall we reach the ocean?"

"Oh, very soon—a deuced deal too soon for you," said Mr. Bitts.

"To-morrow a tug will take us to the Nore, and next day will find us in the Channel—and here comes old Toggle the Pilot," said Grummet, as a stout personage, enveloped in many coats and wraps, came tumbling over the side, with a rubicund and weatherbeaten face, and made his way direct for the grog, which as a preliminary to everything, waited him, as he knew, in the cabin.

It is not an uncommon thing for the captain of a sea-going ship, calling the roll, to find several of his men absent, having been either too intoxicated to sail, or having broken their articles and disappeared, and such deficiencies are then made up by the crimps at Gravesend, as no vessel can go to sea short-handed; but this was never the case with Phil Talbot, who was one of the most popular merchant commanders belonging to the mighty Port of London.

Ere long the Nore was left behind, and Derval had his first instalment of the odious *mal-du-mer* amid the heavy seas of the English Channel, and with a longing and somewhat of an envious heart, he saw old Toggle the Pilot quit the ship and go off to Deal in his boat, waving a farewell with his tarpaulin hat—the last link with old England.

Even the glorious sea is becoming somewhat prosaic now in these our days of steam, telegraphy, and extreme colonisation; yet it was the fortune of Derval Hampton to see much that was stirring, perilous and even terrible, ere he had the down of manhood on his upper lip.

The family at Finglecombe knew that the *Amethyst* had sailed for Rio de Janeiro. Greville Hampton, who was neither destitute of humanity nor of natural interest in his first-born, duly announced the fact, as seen among the "Shipping Intelligence" in his morning paper, and it set Mrs. Hampton thinking—thinking—as she fondled her rather cross-tempered little Rookleigh.

She thought on the contingencies consequent to a sailor's life, separated from death by a six-inch plank, as Juvenal has it—an idea reproduced by Dr. Samuel Johnson—the collisions, fires, foundering, the chances of lee-shores, of floating hulls and icebergs in the dark; the countless chances too of drowning or dying by climate and disease. She had read too in the papers that "in the five years ending June last, 5,028 ships had gone to the

bottom with every man on board, making 6,469 souls," and she thought there were a good many chances against Derval Hampton—the eldest born—ever darkening his father's door again.

But there was one chance, or mischance rather, on which she had not calculated, and which startled the soul of Greville to its inmost depth, when he read on another morning a paragraph worded thus:—

"The ship *Amethyst* of London, outward bound, spoken with in Latitude 13° 17' S. and Longitude 33° 27' W., by Curry & Co.'s ship *Wanderer*, all well, save that a death had happened. A boy had fallen from aloft and perished."

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## CHAPTER IV.

## UNDER THE SOUTHERN CROSS.

THE voyage of the *Amethyst* towards tropical seas and shores was far from monotonous, and more than one startling event occurred during its progress. With her snowy canvas spread, her rigging all a-taut (to use a cant nautical phrase), and her deck, whilom so wet, slippery, and foul in dock, well holystoned and swabbed till it was—as Joe Grummet said—white as a lady's hand, the *Amethyst* was in all her beauty now—all the more so to Derval, who got rid of his sea-sickness ere she cleared the Channel.

“Well, my little man,” said Captain Talbot one day, when Joe Grummet was teaching him the use of the quadrant, “how do you feel on your sea legs—eh?”

“Happy, sir—very happy,” replied Derval, turning his bright young face, which was flushed by the keen breeze, laden by the iodine of many thousand miles of the fresh, glorious, and open ocean.

“That's right, my lad.”

"I have not been so happy for many a year past," said Derval, thinking, perhaps, of his mother.

"Come, come, youngster, it is rather early in life for you to talk of many years, and of happiness in the past tense," said the Captain, amused by a quaintness in the manner of Derval—a manner born of the kind of isolation in which he had lived in his father's house; and save for the annoyance occasionally given to him by the wasp-like nature of Paul Bitts, he would have had nothing to complain of, for the good example and gentlemanly bearing of Captain Talbot and the first and second mates, affected all the ship's company advantageously

As for the self-won ducking in the West India Dock, Derval hoped Mr. Bitts would forget that and get over it in time; but he never did, and in many ways pursued the feud which he had declared, apparently, on the day Derval first joined the ship.

One morning, when he and Derval were in the middle watch (*i.e.* from 12 to 4 A.M., as the ship was nearing the Azores), the latter, overcome by the heavy saline atmosphere of the sea, by youth and the lateness of the hour, began insensibly to doze, with his head resting on the gunnel of the quarter-deck, and in a kind of half-waking dream he thought himself at Finglecombe: young rabbits scudded past in the grass; the hum of the wind in the rigging aloft, suggested that of bees and insects in the sunshine, and the air seemed

to become laden with the familiar fragrance of the apple orchards and garden flowers, till a heavy thwack from the new colt of the inevitable Mr. Paul Bitts awoke him with a nervous start.

"Sleeping are you—on your watch, too!" You'll come to the gallows, you young villain!" exclaimed his senior officer, with a malicious gleam in his closely set and serpent-like eyes; "that will teach you to snore like one of Circe's swine. Now go to windward—keep a bright look-out for the revolving light on Cape Flyaway, and if you see the great sea-serpent, don't forget to call the morning watch."

And, with a chuckle, he coiled away the colt in a pocket of his pea-jacket.

"Keep your weather-eye open," he added in a bullying tone; "and don't let me catch you, in the dark, stealing eggs out of the hen-coops!"

"Please, sir," said Derval, rubbing his shoulders, "I never was a thief."

"But thieving begins sometimes, and opportunity is the devil's game."

Under the special tutelage of Joe Grummet, who conceived a great regard for him, Derval, in conjunction with little Tom Titford, learned to hand, reef and steer, to mount away aloft with ease and confidence, and with both to lie out on the arms of a topgallant yard; to use the marling-spike, to splice and knot, and make a grummet. He knew the name of every part of the ship, of every spar and of all the standing and running rigging; for he



had great aptitude, and proved a smart scholar at this kind of work ; thus, in a little time, it was evident that he would be able to take sights, work a reckoning by log and compass, and calculate variation and leeway. He was taught how to be ready for any emergency of wind or weather ; to consider nothing too trivial for consideration, and to remember, as Joe said, “ how a little leak may sink a great ship.”

Yet his sweet boyish nature still remained ; and now, when far away at sea, he thought, in the warmth of his affection, of the handsome pipe he would “ bring home for papa ” ; of the beautiful shells for his little half-brother ; and he had visions, too, of a wonderful cap, all over ribbons, for old Patty Fripp.

Overhead the sky was now of the cerulean blue that England never knew, and never will know

Captain Talbot made his men strictly observe the “ clean-shirt-days,” as the sailors call Thursday and Sunday ; on the latter he always read prayers at the capstan-head to his crew, who were sure to be neatly dressed, and there was much of that silence which prevails in a man-of-war on that day.

On one of these occasions, just after prayers, Mr. Bitts, to Derval’s great surprise, approached under the lee of the long-boat, amidship, and said, “ Come, youngster—here is a glass of grog for you—just a thimble-

full; the sun is over the fore-yard long ago."

Derval shrank from the beverage, which was proffered in a tumbler, but seeing Mr. Bitts' hand in his pocket wherein the colt was coiled, he drank it off, though nearly choked by the effort, and after that, his perceptions of everything were very vague indeed.

The ship seemed to be sailing round and round upon an axis; he tried to speak, but the difficulty of articulation became great, and the half-uttered nonsense he talked hung upon his lips; he felt alternately maudlin and defiant, especially with young Harry Bowline, who greeted him with shouts of laughter, yet good-naturedly endeavoured to get him below, and a struggle ensued between them.

"What is the matter there, forward?" cried the Captain, in surprise, from the quarter-deck.

"Mr. Hampton taken suddenly ill, sir," replied Mr. Bitts with a gratified grin.

"Strang, see what is the matter."

The young Scots doctor went amidships, and returned laughing, to report that which was really the case, "Young Hampton as screwed as an owl!"

"The deuce he is!" exclaimed the Captain with great annoyance; "how came this to pass?"

"The grog as Mr. Bitts gave him has been too strong for him, sir," said Joe Grummet,

who took in the whole situation and resented it accordingly ; “ riglar thumb-grog it must have been, to my mind.”

Bitts furtively darted a vicious glance at the boatswain, who received it with perfect equanimity

“ What can that boy know about grog ? ” said the Captain angrily.

“ How to get jolly drunk on it apparently,” replied the unabashed Paul Bitts ; “ he is rather a greenhorn yet.”

“ Shame on you, sir ! this is your fault, not his ; and mark me, if it ever happens again, it will be the worse for you and your certificate ! ”

With this threat, the Captain turned and walked aft.

It may be safely recorded that this never happened again, and Derval, full of shame for the occurrence, did all in his power, by proper and zealous behaviour, to wipe off the stain, for such he deemed it, brought upon him by the malevolence of the third mate.

On the watch by night, under skies where new constellations—new to his eyes at least—were studding heaven, he always felt to the full the awful impressiveness, the utter silence of the sea ! Then his thoughts fled home—to that which had latterly been no home to him—and again, in fancy, he saw the lovely dell of Finglecombe, the bay glittering in the sunny distance, the grim rocky portal of the Horses’ Hole, the Pixies Parlour, the stately ruins of Oakhampton, the lone

waste of Wistmanswood, the cob-cottages, and the old haunted mill at the Mill brook, with its silent and mossy wheel.

What a vast time seemed to have elapsed since he left all these behind him !

One day, when the *Amethyst* was near the tropic of Cancer, and ploughing the Sargasso Sea, about daybreak, Tom Tyeblock, the second mate, who had the morning watch, reported a sail, with a signal flying on the lee-bow, so the *Amethyst* was edged down towards her.

She was a large brig, with her sails in considerable disorder. The peak halyards of the spanker gaff had given way, and the sail lay flapping against the mainmast; her spars were topped about in various ways; the maintopsail was full, but the foretopsail lay in the wind; not a soul was to be seen on board, and yet she had signals flying, that said, "Can you send a boat on board?"

When near her, the *Amethyst* lay to, and Captain Talbot ordered Mr. Bitts to take a brace of revolvers with him and go off to the stranger, with Derval and six men, who hazarded all manner of conjectures as to the vessel.

Had her crew all perished of some terrible disease, or been poisoned by a rascally black cook? If so, terrible sights would await them, of corpses lying about, or festering in bunks and berths. Had there been a mutiny, and had she been scuttled, to sink in time? she did look rather deep in the

water, Paul Bitts remarked, adding that she might sink suddenly when they were on board, or alongside, and so carry them down in the vortex she made. Had some dreadful crime compelled her crew to abandon her?

As they neared her, stroke by stroke, the silent, voiceless, and crewless craft, floating in utter silence upon the glassy tropical sea, became an object calculated to impose awe and a solemn sense of great mystery on the boat's crew. At last they were alongside, and as it might have been dangerous to hook on the painter to any part of her, the coxswain held on by boat-hook to the forechains, while with their pulses accelerated by excitement, Paul Bitts and Derval clambered up and leaped on board, the soul of the latter already recoiling within him at anticipation of some sight of horror.

The deck was deserted, but ropes, &c. lay about everywhere in confusion. The long-boat was missing, but its chocks remained over the main hatch. The quarter-boat, too, was gone, and the fall-tackles swung idly at the davit-heads.

They descended to the cabin: it was empty; but a fixed lamp was burning on the table, and a clock ticked at the bulkhead, some books, wine-glasses, and a couple of decanters had evidently slipped off the table, and lay in a heap to leeward. A paroquet, in a gilt cage, hung in the skylight. Save this bird, there was no living thing on board.

The cabin berths had not been slept in, and they, as well as the forecastle bunks, were empty. There was no appearance of corpses, no blood, no weapons, or sign of outrage anywhere. No ship's papers could be found, but her name was the *Bonnie Jean of* . . . and the rest was painted out!

After making certain that there was no one on board the derelict, as the weather was becoming squally, and Captain Talbot had a signal flying "to return," Mr. Bitts quitted the brig, and shoved off. Boy-like, Derval had possessed himself of the paroquet—a beautiful little love-bird, half green and scarlet—in its pretty cage, thinking of it as a gift for his little brother at home; but with a malediction, Paul Bitts told him to "let it alone," and as he delayed, he took it out of the cage and tossed it away to leeward, when it soon disappeared.

What could the emergency have been that caused the still flying signal, now answered too late, "Can you send a boat?" to be hoisted, and to what ship had it been exhibited? It could have been to no town or fort in that latitude and longitude. Moreover, the burning lamp showed that the desertion had been most recent. Where, then, were her crew?

Conjectures were endless; a sharp look-out was kept from aloft, but no boats were seen, and as the *Amethyst* hauled her wind and pursued her course, every eye was turned ever and anon to the floating derelict till she was

hull down, and even till her topsails sank beneath the dim and blue horizon astern.

Derval recalled to memory the old and sea-worn wreck he had seen floating in Barnstaple Bay, and the mysterious interest it had excited in his childish mind, when he never thought that a day would come and find him a sailor and far away on tropical waters.

The episode was duly recorded in the ship's log, and it formed the staple object for comment in the forecastle for the next twenty-four hours, eliciting the narration of many a quaint personal adventure from the seamen, and one of these, a somewhat ghastly one, was told by Joe Grummet.

"You must know, Mates," said he, "that when I was a foremastman aboard the *Boomerang* of Liverpool, bound from Newfoundland to Waterford, in latitude 47 north and longitude 45 west, the look-out men reported a boat in sight, on a dark-grey squally day in April, and bearing about half a mile on the lee-bow, and in the stern-sheets of that identical boat, far out in mid-ocean, sat a man, steering it with an oar! There warn't no vessels in sight, but an iceberg or two, for we were leaving the flocs astern going north with the Gulf stream, so the air, you may believe, was bitterly keen and cold. We edged down towards him, but as he seemed to take no notice of us, or heeded a shout or two, I was sent off with three hands in the quarter-boat to overhaul him. My eye! we found as that 'ere boat was steered by a corpse! In her

stern-sheets he sat stiff, motionless, lifeless, frozen hard as a rock, but with his head drooping a little forward. He was rigidly upright, with the oar over the back-board of the stern, as if he had been a-sculling, and so hard were his hands frozen to it, that we failed to get it from the death-grasp. The boat had been half full of water that had turned to ice, in which he was wedged to his knees. Over his head and shoulders the spray and spoon-drift of the sea had been washing again and again, freezing as it came. How long he must have been dead, or whence or how he came there, there was nothing to tell us. We held the water with our oars, and held our breath too, as the boat with its terrible occupant, on a current and before the impetus of the wind, went bobbing past us, and we struck out for the ship, anxious only to see the last of that ghastly boatman."

Clear, warm, and sunny was the weather as the *Amethyst* ploughed the tropical seas, when Derval saw in the sky the wonderful constellation of six stars named the Southern Cross, which, though coeval with the universe, was first seen with awe by Christian eyes in the fifteenth century, when Cada Mosto, the Venetian, steered his caravel into the Southern Sea.

One fine day Captain Talbot and his three mates were amusing themselves with revolver practice, at a quart-bottle slung from the fore-yard-arm, at which they fired from the quarter-deck, but as the motion of the ship was



considerable, as she was then going before the wind with all her yards square, and consequently rolled heavily, such was the oscillation of the object, that after some twenty shots it was only broken by Mr. Paul Bitts, who was greatly inflated by the circumstance and the applause it won him and now ensued thereon, an event somewhat illustrative of the strange doctrine of chances—a thing happening by luck, without expectation or prevision.

As Mr. Bitts was dropping fresh cartridges into the chambers of his breech-loading pistol, with the air of a candle-snuffer at twenty paces, his eyes fell on Derval, who, with the other two middies, was regarding him with some interest, if it was not a very warm one.

“Well, young fellow, do you think you could do that—eh?” he asked with a grin.

“I should like to try, sir,” replied Derval, colouring.

“Oho! the deuce you would! Why, you young——”

“Give him a shot,” said Captain Talbot, interrupting some abusive epithet; “take my revolver, Hampton. Grummet, run up another bottle to the yard-arm.”

“It will save trouble to let him have a shy at the neck—that is enough for such a marksman!” sneered Paul Bitts.

Derval nervously took the Captain’s pistol, for he had never had such an implement in his hand before, raised it, aimed, and while thinking the report was all he would make,

fired, and, by a most astounding "fluke," smashed the bottle-neck which was yet dangling from the yard-arm!

A burst of astonishment escaped the crew, while the Captain, who evidently knew how it all came to pass, laughed heartily; but not so Mr. Bitts, who felt in this a fresh cause for hatred, and retired aft, sulkily muttering:

"A sly young beggar, who, I believe, knows more of the world, the flesh, and the devil, than the ship's crew all told, for all that his face and manner are so devilish meek!"

But resting on the reputation so suddenly won, Derval did not, for a long time, indulge in any more pistol-shooting.

Now came the time for crossing the line, and from all he had heard of the rough jokes perpetrated on that occasion Derval had a genuine terror of Mr. Bitts, for the absurdities practised often became insulting and cruel. But such is the improvement now wrought among seamen by the spread of education and general progress of refinement, that these coarse sports are decidedly on the wane, and Captain Talbot contenting himself with ordering extra grog to all to drink the health of Neptune, the equator was passed quietly, and many schemes formed secretly by Mr. Paul Bitts for shaving and sousing in slush both Derval and his chum Tom Titford, ended in nothing, to the great relief of both.

After the *Amethyst* was some days' sail beyond the equator and running on a wind, with her topsails set and starboard tacks on

board, the weather became peculiarly gloomy and squally, and one day, when it was Derval's watch with Mr. Tyeblock, the Captain, who had been studying the barometer below, came suddenly on deck, and looked aloft and at the sky.

"Trim the yards anew, Mr. Tyeblock," said he; "the wind is getting more ahead."

"Very good, sir," and the tacks and sheets were promptly attended to.

Joe Grummet and other old seamen were now seen looking occasionally to windward, for they knew well by the dark clouds that were coming banking up from the horizon that they had foul weather to prepare for; but it came slowly. Two or three days of sunless gloom followed, during which no sights could be had or reckoning properly worked, and the doubts concerning the latter were fated to have a perilous solution.

Night was closing amid mist and obscurity, the sea was rising, the vessel rolling heavily, and all was in considerable confusion in the cabin below, where everything that was not made fast *fetched away*, and went crashing to leeward and got jammed or broken.

Coiled on a chest in the companion-way, Derval had been courting a little sleep, when he heard the hoarse voice of Joe Grummet shouting:

"All hands, ahoy! all hands, ahoy! tumble up and take in sail!"

Thick and fast the rain-drops were now pouring on the deck, gorging the foaming scuppers, rushing as they only do in the

tropics ; and rolling from side to side, as if she would dip her yard-arms in the mountain-like billows that ran towards her, the *Amethyst*, with her courses set and topsails nearly close-reefed, was ploughing before the wind through a black and midnight sea. Loud and repeated orders rang confusedly on the rising blast, together with the trampling of feet, the creaking of blocks, the bellowing of the wind through the strained rigging, where loose ropes were flying wildly about, and there were the roar, the wash, and fierce incessant gurgle of the sea as it burst over the bows and boiled away beneath the counter.

“Close-reef topsails!” cried Captain Talbot, while the storm deepened ; and with others, Derval and Tom Titford, under Mr. Bitts, ascended, to do their part of this task, by the fore-rigging, often as they went embracing the shrouds with their legs and arms ; and the ill-conditioned third mate was heard using terrible language as he urged them all up to the cross-trees and out upon the yard.

“Out you go to the starboard ear-ring, you wretched little biscuit-nibbler, and don’t look as if you had joined the Shakers!” he exclaimed, administering a blow with his clenched hand to poor Tom Tit, who turned his little white face upbraidingly towards him, and then lay out manfully on one yard-arm as Derval did on the other, and aided by the strong hands of the seamen at the centre of the spar, got the heavy wet canvas tied hard and fast with the reef points.

Poor Tom "lay out" on the yard with a will, above the black and seething deep, with all his strength; but in the fury of the wind it began to fail him, or it might be that in the force of the gale he lost his presence of mind, and when the men began their descent he remained, with his hands convulsively clutching the yard, and his feet on the slippery foot-ropes or in the stirrups thereof.

"Now then, stupid! are you going to sleep there?" cried Paul Bitts from the crosstrees, "or must I rouse you with my colt, and make you dance the binnacle hornpipe when I get you on deck?"

"Mother—oh, Mother!" the boy was heard to shriek, his small voice sounding weirdly on the skirt of the howling blast, as he slipped from the yard-arm, and vanishing into the wrack and obscurity below, was seen no more!

Derval felt his blood grow cold; and as one in a dreadful dream, from which he must waken to find Tom Tit by his side, he made his way, he knew not how, but mechanically, to the deck, where the tragedy was reported to the Captain. But there was not a moment now, either for comment, explanation, or regret, for there came aft a terrible cry from the look-out man at the bowsprit.

"Breakers ahead! breakers on *both* bows!"

"In the name of heaven, how came breakers here!" exclaimed Captain Talbot, for a moment forgetting that for many hours past he had been unable to verify his whereabouts.

Proceeding forward in haste, the Captain went out to the cap of the bowsprit. In peril he was a man whose nerves became as iron! Steadily he looked around him, but even his cheek blanched then, though none could perceive it.

Through the black gloom, a blacker barrier of mighty rocks was rising right ahead. Rolling fiercely before a northern blast, the sea was breaking on them wildly, dashing its white spray as high as the maintop, and, as the waves receded, the sable fronts of two particular or insulated masses were plainly visible from time to time, with a mass of froth between them; while accelerated by the wind astern, and no doubt by the indraught in the reef, for a reef it appeared to be, the stately *Amethyst* seemed to increase her speed from ten knots an hour to something far beyond it.

Clinging to a belaying pin on the port side, as the ship rushed on, there came into Derval's uninitiated mind only the fear of immediate death, with a quickened circulation of the blood and a painful tightness of the chest, and in this emotion men far his seniors shared, at that dreadful crisis; but now the voice of Captain Talbot, who had obtained his trumpet, was heard even amid the roar of the breakers, and a clear and manly voice it was.

In that tropical region the water and spray that swept over the ship were warm nearly as new milk, and by this time the poultry and pigs were all washed overboard and drowned.

“There is an opening in the reef, three points before the port beam,” said the Captain; “Mr. Tyeblock, take the wheel and steer for it—three points, remember! There may be water there to carry us through. Hands to the braces; brace the yards, forward!”

Then, as the *Amethyst* sprang to the blast, the waves boiled over her lee gunnel; but finding a terrible strain aloft,—

“Let fly the topsail sheets!” was now the order of Captain Talbot, and then, as the canvas flew to ribbons that cracked like thunder in the gale, the topmasts were saved.

“Hard up with the helm now, Tyeblock! Hands to the braces and square away the yards.”

Headlong careered the ship on her way through the narrow passage which Talbot’s eye had detected, and splendidly was she steered in the skilful hands of Tyeblock, who exultingly declared that he could turn her on a sixpence.

“The reef is astern, we are safe, thanks be to God!” exclaimed Captain Talbot, whose emotion of prayerful gratitude was shared by all who heard him.

Deep water ahead, was reported by Girtline, the second mate, who was in the bows with the hand-lead.

“Heave to, till dawn comes!” was now the Captain’s order, and the ship was accordingly hove to, about two miles to leeward of

the reef, and a keen look-out was kept in every direction for breakers.

On sounding the well, Joe Grummet reported that the ship had sprung a leak, and the water was rising at the rate of two feet an hour, so the chain pumps were rigged, and all idlers—such as the carpenter, cook, steward, and others—took the first spell thereat, to be immediately followed by a fresh gang, so that the leak made little way.

The gale abated as day came in with its tropical rapidity and splendour, and Captain Talbot knew instantly that the reef they had so nearly perished on, was one of those between the numerous rocky and barren little islets that stud the whole coast around the island of Fernando-de-Noronha, which lies about seventy leagues north-east from the Cabo de San Roque, on the coast of Brazil.

In the full glory of the morning sun, towered up the Campanario (or Belfry), a steep mountain of the isle, a thousand feet in height, and of a form so remarkable, that on one side the upper portion overhangs its base. The Portuguese flag was hoisted on Fort Remedios, as the *Amethyst* passed on the north-west side of the island, with a soft and pleasant breeze, while the hands were aloft, bending a new set of topsails, or attending to the leak and other damages of the eventful night.

While sent aloft, for practice, to assist in bending on the new foretopsail, Derval had



not much time either for reflection on the catastrophe of the past sleepless night, or observing the wonderful multitude of turtle's eggs which cover all the rocks and shore thereabout between the months of December and April; but when excitement and work were over, he, like others, had leisure to think over poor Tom Titford, whose maritime career, to which he had looked forward in all the delight of youth, was thus ended ere it had well begun.

His empty berth and vacant place at table, his uniform cap hanging on a peg, and his little trunk with all his worldly goods remained; but his soft smiling face and his earnest honest eyes were gone from human gaze for ever, and Derval and Hal Bowline were very sad on the subject of his sudden loss, which made them somehow closer friends, while each felt that the victim might have been himself or the other; and both instinctively clenched their fists when they heard Bitts say, with a silent laugh, that "even if the body were found, there would be no coroner's inquest in the latitude of Pedro-de-Noronha, and that young lubbers when they went aloft should remember the maxim of 'one hand for myself, and one for my owners.'"

So the middy, of whose death the passing ship brought tidings, was not Derval Hampton, but little Tom Titford. Had it been himself, he thought, who would have sorrowed for him? and it cannot seem strange that

the image of old Patty Fripp occurred to the lonely lad even before that of his own father.

For days after the storm, he felt his legs and arms stiff from the effect of bruises and abrasions sustained in claspings the shrouds when going aloft to reef the topsails.

Days of light breezes and bright weather followed each other now, and on a fine morning in March the cheerful cry of "Land in sight," passed from mouth to mouth on board the *Amethyst*. To Derval's eye, the faint blue mass that rose west-north-west about four miles distant, seemed an island; but to Talbot and many of the crew it was familiar as Cape Frio, a promontory on the Brazilian coast, sixty-four miles eastward of their destination; and with all that interest and curiosity excited by the appearance of a new and strange country, he watched the oval-shaped mass of granite cliff that terminates a long range of mountains, and all its features were distinct by five in the evening, when it was only seven miles distant.

With midnight came squally weather, with thunder and red flashes of lightning, against which, "instant seen and instant lost," rose the black outline of the heavy waves, serrated like the teeth of a saw; but when day came in, the *Amethyst* was standing in for the Bay of Rio de Janeiro, under full sail, with a steady breeze from the sea. Long ere this, the watch on deck had been busy getting the cables out of the tier, laying them in French-

fake on the deck, a peculiar method adopted to let them run out freely, precluding all danger of the links getting foul. They were then bent to the anchors, which were hoisted over the bows and hung by the ring ready for use.

The flag of the Royal Naval Reserve was now run up in a round ball to the gaff, where it was shaken loose, and then "the blessed bit o' bunting," as Joe Grummet admiringly and affectionately called it, floated gallantly on the breeze.

By noon Captain Talbot gave the order to shorten sail; the courses were hauled up; the warm breeze swept through the open rigging; the anchor was let go—the cable swept with a roar through the hawse-hole, and the ship rode at her moorings, in eight fathoms water, while the hands and apprentices went aloft to furl everything fore and aft.

Around was now the noble bay of Rio, studded by fully eighty islets, with the city and all its shipping in the foreground; and the high range of beautiful mountains, clothed with wood to their summits, called the Corcovado, that bound its western plain, in the background. Along the beach lies the main street, called the Rua Direita, from which all the others branch off and form a city of palaces, for such it is; and high over all its edifices, conspicuous on a hill that juts into the sea between it and the Praya de Flamingo, towers Nossa Senhora da Gloria, the greatest of the sixty churches in Rio, where eternal spring and summer reign together.

But we do not mean to “do Guide Book,” and dwell on the beauties and wonders of Rio de Janeiro ; neither do we mean to linger on the *debüt* of Derval or his probationary life as a sailor, for we have much to relate of his future career. Suffice it now, that “bulk” was soon broken on board the *Amethyst* ; the cargo started and sent ashore, to be replaced by another for Van Dieman’s Land, and by the labour of slaves, who in Rio are made veritable beasts of burden, and are to be seen with iron collars about their necks, and often with masks of tin, that conceal the lower portion of their faces and are secured behind by a common padlock ; and the last day of March saw the *Amethyst* standing out of the bay, with a land breeze, under a press of sail, once more to plough the world of waters.

Ere the vessel sailed Derval felt, but for the last time, the colt of Mr. Paul Bitts, who called him “the lazy scum of a fish-pond,” and who delighted in malignant cruelty and the torture of his own species, and highly resented the circumstance of the lad being a little absorbed in a letter from home, brought by the mail steamer. His father had heard of his safety, through the owners, Curry & Co., and no doubt the fright he had received caused him to reproach himself, for a time—but a time only—with his coldness and neglect of his firstborn, and lack of that affection which latterly he had denied him and bestowed entirely on the other son ; and poor Derval’s honest heart grew very, very full indeed, as he

read and re-read the lines his father's hand had traced, and which he valued more than the twenty-pound note he enclosed to him, and which could not be of much use while on the waters of the Southern Sea.

Fortunately he had been well grounded in Euclid and algebra, by the kind tutelage of Mr. Asperges Laud, to whom his thoughts ever went home gratefully, and in the knowledge of his profession he made rapid progress under Joe Grummet, a tutor of a very different kind; while his mind, as active as his body, required and delighted in scientific research. He became a prime favourite with the seamen, knew and understood their characters, and was all the more in favour that he quickly knew the whole parts of the ship from stem to stern, and could act by turns cooper and carpenter, sailmaker and ropemaker, so clever was his head and so skilful was he with his hands.

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## CHAPTER V.

## AFTER LONG YEARS.

FOUR years have elapsed since we last saw Derval, and since then the *Amethyst* had been freighted to so many parts of the world, that he had seen a vast deal of it and won much skill and experience, but had never once been near his home.

Great were the changes which time and circumstances had effected there.

From the hour Greville Hampton began to speculate, it seemed as if everything he touched turned to gold. He had bought and sold, sold and bought, and speculated, till he was becoming one of the richest men in Devonshire or Cornwall, and all this growing good fortune he somehow insensibly connected with his second marriage, and poor Mary was as completely forgotten, apparently, as if she had never existed.

His success was great; it astonished himself and others too; and, after the fashion of the toadying world, he was greatly looked up

by many who, at one period of his life, knew him not.

The last of the humble cob-cottages had disappeared, and with it the last of the aboriginal inhabitants of Finglecombe, the villa residences of Bayview Terrace were in great request, and a handsome sea-wall, called the Grand Promenade, occupied the shingly shore on which the ocean had freely rolled for ages.

Finglecombe was now inhabited by a circle of families who dined and tea-ed each other, and, moreover, closely criticised each other, for "pig-iron always looks down on tenpenny nails"; who attended church and, frequently uninvited, each others' marriages, baptisms, and funerals; and more than all, a great hotel was built, with a gin-palace as an adjunct, and the once secluded Combe began rapidly to approach the dignity of a cockney watering-place, in every way, however, a source of wealth to its lord and proprietor.

The thatched parsonage and the little church of the middle ages alone remained unchanged, though Mr. Asperges Laud was more silver-haired, and he had, under the influences of surrounding gentility, ventured to light two candles on his altar.

The wayside booth, dignified by the name of a railway station, that boasted of but one porter, who often travelled to and fro per train, and acted as deputy stoker, &c., had now been replaced by one of imposing aspect, with a spacious platform, a staff of officials, and

an airy young damsel to superintend its buffet.

Mrs. Hampton's carriage was one of the features of the new settlement, but though to the poor of Finglecombe, or its vicinity rather, she was, as ever, no friend, her name appeared often in print as a patron of local charities.

Of all these wonderful changes the toiler of the sea knew little, if anything at all; his half-brother Rookleigh was now a pampered and very precocious boy of eleven, and already, under his mother's influence, he was beginning to be infected by an idea that if Derval—the fact of whose existence was referred to occasionally—ever did return, he could not but view him, elder though he was, as an interloper and intruder where he was not wanted, all the more as the family lawyers had begun to foster her pride by some confident surmises concerning ousting the Lord Oakhampton out of his title in her husband's favour.

The perils of the sea, the chances of climate, and many chances militated (thought Mrs. Hampton) against Derval ever returning again; and she comfortably, with a view to her pet's interests, made up her mind that too probably he never would return, and that all his father had made and was yet amassing, would eventually go to her own and only son Rookleigh.

Towards the end of the fourth year of her absence from home, the *Amethyst* was running



from Rio de Janeiro to Bermuda; and time had seen some changes in her. Many of the old hands had shipped on board other craft; but Captain Talbot still held his post, as did Joe Grummet and Mr. Girtline; but Harry Bowline had been promoted as second mate, and Derval, now past his eighteenth year, was third, *vice* the ill-conditioned Mr. Paul Bitts, who had come to an untimely end, when Derval nearly lost his life in trying to save him.

While in the act of endeavouring to stimulate with his inevitable colt an apprentice boy, who was at work greasing the sheaves of the starboard catblock, Bitts fell overboard. The ship, which was going before an easy breeze, was promptly thrown in the wind, and, aware that Bitts was unable to swim, Derval, without a thought or consideration, threw off his jacket, and plunged in to save or assist him.

This occurred within a day's sail of Tristan d'Achuna. The height from which he leaped—the top-gallant forecastle, as the short upper deck forward is named—made him go very deep into the water, and when he came to the surface a cry of horror escaped him, for he could see only one of the man's hands above it, while all around was crimsoned with blood!

In a moment he knew that a shark had taken him, and every instant he expected the same fate. The breath seemed to leave his body at the terrible anticipation, and thus he sank more than once, nearly paralysed.

Promptly though the mainyard had been backed, the *Amethyst* had forged some distance ahead, and Derval gave himself up for lost, though he heard the clamour on board each time he rose to the surface, and the rattle of the fall-tackles, with the splash, as a quarter-boat was being lowered and shoved off towards him.

As if to add to his horror he saw—or thought he saw—the black dorsal fin of the monster standing steadily above the water about twenty yards distant.

“God help me! God spare me!” escaped his lips, for death in an awful shape seemed terribly close indeed, and every action of his past life seemed to come in memory vividly before him, compressed into the narrow space of a minute or two.

Half senseless with actual fear, he was dragged into the boat, and he was barely on board the ship when no less than four sharks, all seeking for prey, were seen under the star-board counter, where they continued to follow her for some time after the yard-heads were filled, and she once more stood on her course.

The crew crowded round Derval, and Captain Talbot shook him warmly by the hand.

“You are a brave, good lad!” said he, “and had you saved the poor fellow, should have had such a medal as I now wear. I have twice saved human life at sea, but never in the face of peril such as this. Poor Paul Bitts! he was never a friend of yours, certainly; but

he has come to a most awful end, with all his imperfections on his head."

After a little time the Captain decided that on getting a certificate he should be his successor.

For many a day and night after this did Derval shudder at the thought of what he had gone through, and recal the acute agony of his emotions in the water; but other events came to pass, and gradually the horror lessened in his memory.

Now past eighteen years of age, Derval's face was decidedly of a handsome cast, inherited, like his well-knit figure, from his father, and he had the soft, gentle, and earnest eyes of his mother—the tender Mary, whose grave was under the shadow of Finglecombe Church, but on which no loving hand laid a chaplet now. He was intelligent and experienced far beyond his years, and had, in the opinion of Joe Grummet, only one defect as a sailor—a fancy for sedulously cultivating on his upper lip something that Joe stigmatised as "fluff"; but it was certainly adding fast to the character of a very fine cast of features.

So it was as third mate, and as such keeping a bright look-out ahead, while assisting Mr. Girtline to con, or direct the steerage, that, on a brilliant afternoon in autumn—though there is no autumn in those isles of eternal summer—Derval saw the Bermudas, to all appearance like a range of low sterile hills, at the base of which the ocean is dashed

into a line of white foam, rise gradually on the lee-bow, while cheerily the afternoon watch were singing, as they got the "ground tackle" ready and bent to the anchors.

These isles are so numerous that there is said to be one for every day in the year—some writers say four hundred and more—and as the ship neared them the short greensward that covers them, their dark cedar-trees, and pretty, but low, white dwellings, rapidly became visible, together with the masts of several vessels of war, as the group serves as a summer station for some of our American squadron, and also as a rendezvous for the great steamers of the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company; but the whole of these isles, which are formed by the zoophyte, or coral worm, are so completely hemmed in by perilous rocks, that it is only with extreme caution that a vessel of even ten tons burden can enter the roads. The water, however, is so beautifully clear and pellucid that the pilots can make their way with considerable facility between the coral reefs.

There is but one channel for large vessels into the principal anchorage, and through that the *Amethyst* was guided by a native pilot at flood-tide, for at low-water the whole of the rocks are nearly dry.

After the cargo was out, there was some delay about getting a freight for England, as the main dependence of the colony is upon the naval and military establishments that have been formed there, and on the shipyards

and saltworks; and now there had been a falling off in onions and whale oil, which are among the chief exports of the "vexed Bermoothes."

To this delay was added another. The *Amethyst* had sprung her maintopmast in a sudden gale of wind, one of those "Bermuda squalls" so dreaded by all navigators of those seas, and she had suffered other damages, which compelled the Captain to place her in the hands of the dockyard people; thus, as there was plenty of leave-going, Derval was frequently on shore, and on one of these occasions a rather curious adventure befel him.

Joe Grummet had prepared Derval for seeing much that was novel in these Summer Isles, as they were not inaptly named from Sir George Summers, who was driven there in a storm in 1609, and whose heart is buried in one of them; but Joe could not prevail upon him to accept the genuine old nautical idea that the land and the coral crust composing it is so thin as to be easily broken, even by a stroke of the foot. But so many wrecks took place among their shoals, that the Spaniards of old named them Devils Isles, and Joe knew by tradition the strange story regarding a mighty multitude of rats, that came, no one knew from where, and, multiplying exceedingly, swarmed over all the isles, and eat up the corn, the fruit, and all green things for a period of five years, after which came a cloud of ravens out of the sky and destroyed them

in turn, since when no raven has been seen in the Bermudas.\*

Derval saw whales trapped and harpooned among the coral reefs, while the very sharks contended with the natives for the blubber in the warm shoal water, and more than once he had climbed Tibbs Hill, the highest elevation there, only a hundred and eighty feet in altitude; and he had seen the gangs of natives toiling at the cisterns in which rain-water is preserved for the shipping, for there are few wells and no fresh-water streams, but the dew-point ranges very high indeed.

One day, in his rambles, Derval came upon a little spot of remarkable beauty near the sea-shore. Many caverns, the roofs of which sparkle with brilliant spars, and having fantastic stalactites formed of the dripping water—genuine coral caverns, beautiful as the transformation scene in a pantomime, with their reflected lights, colours, shadows and uncertainties—are to be found in many parts of these isles, having in them pools of cool water delicious to bathe in.

Through one of these from the sea-shore—one in which it is said the poet Waller wrote a portion of his poetical description of Bermuda, when in exile there he penned his insipid “Battle of the Summer Isles,”—Derval wandered to where its inner end opened on a beautiful little dell, an amphi-

\* This story is told in the *Atlas Geographus*, 1717, vol. v.

theatre of coral cliffs and verdure, at the bottom of which lay a salt pool filled always by the sea at each flood tide, and therein he was certain that more than once he saw a stealthy shark gliding.

Bordering it were the palmetto palms, with luscious fruit like plums in colour, and those enormous leaves, each of which are of such amazing length that they are used to roof houses; the oak, the ash, bananas, orange, lemon, mahogany and caoutchouc trees all growing in luxuriance together, and the coffee plant flourishing wild under the lofty cedars.

Delighted with the beauty of the cool and shady place, Derval stretched himself at length upon the velvet sward, and proceeded to enjoy a cigar, while watching, high above his head, the struggles of a small bird which was caught in the web of a spider—one of those spiders there so remarkable for their size and a peculiar kind of beauty, and the webs of which are, in colour and substance, a veritable raw silk.

His attention was next attracted by the appearance of a lady and a young girl walking slowly on the summit of a coral rock, or cliff, that overhung the salt pool. The lady, who carried a large white sunshade, was proceeding leisurely, reading a book, while the girl went hither and thither gathering flowers.

“Take care, Clara darling,” he heard the lady say; “keep back from the edge of the rocks.”

“Do let me gather these flowers,” was the

entreating reply, "and I shall make you such a lovely bouquet."

"Stay, I insist upon it," said the lady.

"Oh, I shall be so very careful," replied the sweet little English voice, which sounded so pleasantly to the ears of the listener,—but a shriek closed the sentence.

When venturing to the verge to gather the coveted trifle, the girl had fallen over, and vanished from the eyes of her horrified companion — her governess, as she eventually proved to be—who fled, uttering wild and breathless cries for assistance, for she knew that the little one had fallen from a height of nearly a hundred feet.

At the same moment a half stifled cry escaped Derval, who, with the keenest alarm, saw that in her descent a stump of laurel projecting from the cliff had caught a portion of the girl's dress, a species of muslin scarf that went round her waist, and there she hung, blind with terror and silent in her agony, some fifty feet above the rocks that shelved steeply downward to the pool or salt-water tarn.

"Keep still, girl, keep still!" cried Derval, who saw that already her frail protection was beginning to rend, while he instantly commenced to climb towards her, and as only a British sailor can climb, finding footing and things to grasp where a landsman would have found none.

At last he reached her, but not without incredible difficulty and great peril, at the



very instant when the delicate scarf had nearly parted, and she must have perished miserably on the rocks or in the water below. To make assurance doubly sure, he grasped one part of her dress with his teeth, another with his left hand, winding it at the same time round his arm, and holding her thus, while she clutched his neck, he began his descent to the base, breathless and silent; for to ascend, though the way was shorter, proved impossible, as the rock over which she had fallen was an impending one.

The base at last was reached, when Derval could scarcely respire, and was trembling in every fibre with exertion and anxiety; and intent on conveying his half-senseless charge to her friends without delay, as he knew that their grief would be intolerable, he deemed his quickest way would be through the cavern to the sea-shore; but he had not proceeded far, when he found the flood tide was already coming in so fast, that to pass or repass was impossible, and he could but clamber up into a recess, and place her there on a dry shelf of the coral formation till the tide ebbed again; and in that strange shelter there was a reflected light from the rising water at both ends, that while it produced some very curious and picturesque effects of colour and shadow, enabled them to see distinctly around them.

“Thank you, thank you, sir,—oh so much, so very much!” sobbed the child (she did not seem to be yet in her teens), and after the terror and prolonged shock she had under-

gone, she wept bitterly and hysterically, with her beautiful little head on Derval's shoulder, while his arm yet encircled her; but his voice and manner were so kind, tender, and reassuring, that after a time she became soothed, and "disengaging" herself from him, as the novels have it, so shyly, so prettily, and like a little lady, said:

"Oh, what a fright my poor papa will be in, when Miss Sampler tells him of my fall! How will he ever be able to thank you, sir!"

"Thank Heaven, thank Heaven—not me—that you are safe," said Derval, earnestly. "Poor child! what a fate you have escaped!" he added with a shudder as he looked at the tender and delicate form, the soft violet eyes, the rich brown hair, and mignonne face, flushed with excitement, and thought of what might have been, had he not been there—had he been too late, or failed in his courageous attempt!

He gazed on her with all the interest the great service he had rendered, her great beauty, and her present helplessness all seemed to excite, and he said, half to himself:

"Had you fallen to the base, you had been instantly killed; if into the water, the sharks——" and shudderingly he thought of his recent episode near Tristan d'Acunha. "I shall ever bless heaven I was so near you, child!"

"I am not a child," said she with a pout on

her rosy lip, as her colour came back; "I am twelve years old."

"And who was the lady with you—your mamma?"

"Oh no; my dear mamma is dead."

"Who, then?"

"My governess, Miss Sampler. Do you live near this?" she asked.

"I am a sailor, and live in my ship. She is now in the dockyard. And you—you must, of course, live near this?" he added, seeing that she was without a head-dress.

"Yes; in the large white house that has great cannons in front of it, and where a pretty flag is always flying till sunset, when boom! goes one of the cannon, and down it comes."

"It is a garrison, then?"

"Oh no; it is papa's house. Oh, how papa will thank you for saving his little girl—he loves me so much!" Her voice trembled and her soft eyes filled as she said this, and added prettily, "I am the only one he has now; all my sisters are buried beside mamma."

"Where?"

"In England, far, far away—in Devonshire."

"I know Devonshire well!" exclaimed Derval with growing interest.

"Do you?" she asked, while her earnest eyes dilated.

"May I ask your name?"

"Clara."

"A pretty name! Clara what?"

"Hampton. And yours?"

"Hampton too."

“How very, very odd!”

Derval laughed, as the little “situation” began to have “its charm,” in one way, but not quite in another. In their hiding-place, the whole floor of which was now a stretch of deep and shining water, the sound of excited voices reached them, as from a distance, from time to time—the voices of those who, no doubt, were in search of the lost one, and with whom Derval could not communicate, for there—either brought in by the flood-tide from the sea, or by it out of the pool—he could see, at no great distance from the perch occupied by himself and his shrinking companion, the back or dorsal fin of a great shark above the surface of the smooth dead water, while the whole of its awful length was visible beneath it.

The monster swam slowly to and fro—Derval, sailor-like, never doubting but it heard their voices, and was only waiting if opportunity served, or the water rose, to make a mouthful of each of them; but he felt safe and secure, as they were above high-water mark, as he could see by the colour of the coral walls; and when, ultimately, the tide did begin to ebb, Jack Shark passed out with it, and eventually disappeared.

Before this came to pass, Derval and the rescued had conversed on many things; and he found that, young though she was, there was a sweet, womanly sympathy about her, that led him, unconsciously, to tell her much concerning himself and his affairs, and how

and why he left pleasant Devonshire to become a sailor, how quickly he had risen to be third mate of a handsome ship, what a fine fellow Captain Talbot was, and so forth, and as the little lady listened to him, her soft eyes filled with interest and wonder.

At last the ebbing tide left the floor of the cavern, and the shingly beach without it, completely dry, when the red sinking sun was nearly level with the sea, all crimsoned now; and giving his hand to his pretty namesake, he led her forth, and she at once indicated a path that led from the shore to her home. Ascending this, and passing through a grove of Palmetto palms, they found themselves on the plateau of the rock from whence she had fallen, and the appearance of the place made her shrink to Derval's side, while his arm went kindly and instinctively round her. But they had not proceeded far when they came upon a group of excited searchers, perhaps the same whose voices Derval had heard, and among them were officers in undress, soldiers from the garrison, seamen from the ships, planters, clerks, and blacks, their white teeth and eyes gleaming, screaming, hallooing, and all bearing ladders, ropes, poles, drags, and even lanterns, for the darkness was close at hand now.

"Papa, Papa!" suddenly exclaimed the young lady, and snatching her hand from that of Derval, she sprang like an antelope into the open arms of a careworn and

haggard, but tall and distinguished-looking man, who had a decided air of good birth and breeding his planter-like costume, of a broad straw hat and white linen coat and trousers, failed to mask; and in his close embrace she sobbed hysterically.

"Safe, Clara—safe, my child!" said he in a broken voice; and then there was a minute's pause, during which the haggard lines grief and alarm had suddenly drawn on his face began already to fade out. "Oh, my darling, my darling!—what miracle is this?"

"That gentleman saved me, Papa; saved me, saved me!" was the sobbing reply.

"But how is she harmless after such a fall?" asked her father shudderingly of those around him, and as if unable to believe the evidence of his own senses, while the crowd closed round.

Derval briefly and modestly related all that had occurred.

Then the father of the rescued girl wept as he pressed and retained Derval's hands in his; but failed to find language in which to thank him coherently. After a time he asked:

"Do you belong to a ship of war, sir?"

"No, sir."

"To what, then?" asked the other, glancing at the uniform.

"To the ship *Amethyst*, of London, carrying the flag of the Royal Naval Reserve," replied Derval, touching his cap, for somehow the bearing of him he addressed bore the impress of one in no small authority.

The latter drew a handsome ring from his finger, and presented it to Derval, saying :

"I beg that you will accept of this, and wear it in remembrance of one whose gratitude you have won for life."

The stone was a magnificent onyx, and Derval saw, with a start, how that it bore a shield with three choughs, and the motto *Clarior e Tenebris*. He bowed, and placed it on his finger, saying :

"May I ask whom I have the honour of addressing?"

"This," said an officer (an aide-de-camp apparently), who stood near, "is Lord Oakhampton, Governor of the Bermudas."

His remote kinsman and his father's enemy! Confusion, astonishment, and then something of gratification filled the heart of Derval by turns, and all together.

"I am deeply grateful to you, young gentleman, for the great service you have rendered to me; but may I, in turn, ask your name, that I may never forget it?"

"My name, like yours, my lord, is Hampton—Derval Hampton."

"Are you a Devonshire man?"

"Yes, my Lord, my father lives at Finglecombe."

Lord Oakhampton coloured, and a cloud came over his decidedly handsome face, as he was well aware who Greville Hampton was, and what his pretensions were; and now, with a little more of hauteur than hospitality in his manner, he said :

“Dine with me at Government House to-morrow; eight is the hour, and I shall be glad to see you then.”

Derval muttered his thanks, and lifted his cap, but ere he retired Lord Oakhampton shook his hand, Clara gave him hers confidently and pleasantly, and the interview terminated, for the night had fallen and Derval had to make his way back to the ship.

The episode in all its details gave him much food for thought, as he proceeded slowly homeward. He knew not, till then, that Lord Oakhampton was in the Colonial Service at all; neither did he know that by extravagance the peer had found the salary of Governor of the “vexed Bermoothes,” some thousands per annum, a comfortable addition to a shattered income, while his estates were at dry-nurse. Derval knew now, however, that he had done an act demanding a supreme amount of gratitude, from a proud and rather repellent man, who would, perhaps, rather have been indebted therefor to any other person in the world, than the son of Greville Hampton; while, on the other hand, Derval had been taught to view his lordship as his hereditary enemy, the usurper of his father’s rights, though why, or how, Derval could not define; and that, more than all, in the days of his father’s unexpected penury and obscurity at Finglecombe, he had sedulously withheld all countenance and assistance from him.

“By Jove!” thought he; “sharks, sea-



lawyers, the sailor's natural foes, seem to be my friends! One gets me promotion, *vice* poor Paul Bitts, and I have the honour of saving a peer's daughter from another—my little kinswoman, too. I wonder in what degree she is so—a charming little creature, too!”

His father seemed of late to have taken but little interest in his movements or his success; but perhaps this startling episode might kindle some emotion of revengeful triumph that great good had been rendered for evil done.

Derval duly presented himself at Government House next evening, and was received by Lord Oakhampton with considerable impressment, and by him was presented, as the rescuer of his child from a dreadful peril—all Hamilton now rang with the story, though none knew precisely who the hero was—to a select circle, composed of the heads of departments, civil and military, the Chief Justice, the two puisne judges, and so forth; and as Derval was a gentleman by birth, education, and breeding, all were agreeably impressed by his appearance, for added thereto, he had now that easy and perfectly self-possessed manner which is only to be acquired by intercourse with the world, by travel, and some experience of life; and there were many things combined, which made Derval Hampton, in expression and bearing, older than his years.

Modest and reserved by nature and habit, he was, for a time, rather abashed to find

himself somewhat the lion of the evening, and was glad when a little change was made in the current of the conversation, by the appearance of Clara Hampton and her governess with the dessert; and wonderfully bright and brilliant the little lady looked, all trace of yesterday's alarm and shock having passed away; but, though she accorded him her pretty hand very frankly, and with a wonderful smile of pleasure and welcome, she was very shy with him now, as contrasted with the mutual confidences they had exchanged in the cavern, "while Jack Shark was swimming to and fro, keeping a species of blockade upon them," as Derval laughingly said.

After a time she drew close to his side, and with great, yet childlike gracefulness, presented him with a flower from her dress, saying:

"I made this bouquet for you. Papa says no one can make a button-hole—why he calls it so, I don't know—like me."

So Derval gallantly kissed the little bouquet, and placed it in the lapelle of his naval coat.

Ere he left, Lord Oakhampton, thawing considerably in his somewhat measured manner—a manner born, as Derval knew, of circumstances far remote from Bermuda—assured him, that if he could do aught for him in anyway, to command his services. Very pleasant all this, thought Derval, who supposed he had no true friends in the world save his shipmates on board the *Amethyst*;

but remembering his father's feud and claims, he returned thanks very reservedly and took his departure.

For certain reasons, chiefly family considerations, and his own dislike of all fuss and speculation, Derval said nothing of his adventure, or his visit to Government House, on board the *Amethyst*, which lay at Ireland Island, the chief place there for shipping; thus, great was the astonishment of his "skipper," when an officer in undress military uniform arrived from Hamilton, the chief town of these isles, with an official letter addressed to "Captain Talbot, H.M. Royal Naval Reserve."

"For you, sir," said the aide-de-camp.

"From whom, sir?"

"His Excellency the Governor."

Captain Talbot was rather, as he afterwards told, "taken aback," but he said:

"Won't you have a glass of sherry and a biscuit, sir?"

"Thanks, very much—no," replied the other, and stepped on shore, while the surprise of Talbot increased very much when he read the letter twice over, and then starting up, ordered Joe Grummet to "pipe all hands," and bring them aft, "and run the ensign up to the gaff."

"Hats off, my lads," said the Captain, his face glowing with pleasure; "for this comes from the Queen's representative."

The letter, of which we only give an outline, proved to be from "His Excellency Lord

Oakhampton, K.C.B., Governor of the Bermuda Islands, &c. &c.," warmly recommending Mr. Derval Hampton to his captain and owners for his gallant conduct, which was fully detailed therein; and congratulating Captain Talbot on having such an officer under him in the *Amethyst*.

Whereupon Joe Grummet took off his old battered tarpauline hat, from a head that was getting grey now, and led the van of three stentorian cheers for the third mate; and Derval heard them, as he had heard the letter, with cheeks flushing scarlet, like those of a school-girl, and a wildly beating heart.

And in honour of the whole event, which Hal Bowline duly engrossed on the ship's log, Joe Grummet's whistle was next heard, summoning all hands to "splice the main-brace," an invitation never unattended to by sailors, as they are ever ready for a glass of grog.

The ship was now getting ready for sea, the hatches were being battened down, the boats hoisted in, the studding-sail gear rove, the royal yards crossed, &c., and Derval was compelled to spend much of his time on board of the *Amethyst*; and now came the last day he could pass, perhaps, on shore.

Unconsciously he wandered to the little dell of the palmetto and other trees, the coral cliff and the salt pool, all of which impressed him so deeply as the scene of a startling adventure. A fragment of Clara's muslin dress yet fluttered from the laurel stump by which her fall had been arrested, either on the rocks

below or into the pool, where sharks were as usual swimming whenever the flood tide floated them in; and as Derval surveyed the cliff up which he had clambered to her assistance, now, when he had not the impetus of excitement, he thought himself a very clever fellow, but doubted whether he could achieve the same feat again.

Something glittering at the foot of the cliff caught his eye. It was a locket of gold, the size of a florin, with the name *Clara* in pearls on one side—an ornament doubtless lost by Miss Hampton on the day in question, and he speedily possessed himself of it. Opening it, he found that it was empty, but prepared at once to restore it, and do what the rules of society required, to leave with it a farewell card at Government House.

On going thither he was informed that Lord Oakhampton had gone to open the Assembly of Representatives (consisting of thirty-six in number, four of whom are elected by each parish), so he inquired if he could see Miss Clara Hampton.

The valets, who knew the service he had rendered her, ushered him at once into the drawing-room, where he found her, with all her rich brown hair loose for coolness, and fanning herself with a large circular fan, composed of the snow-white feathers of some rare tropical bird, and intently conning some task set her by Miss Sampler.

“I have come to bid adieu to your papa and yourself,” said Derval.

"I am so sorry he is from home," she replied, as she gave him her hand, and with more self-possession than she might have had, if a few years older, invited him at once to be seated. The soft mignonne face seemed to Derval's eyes more beautiful than ever in its childlike purity, and her violet eyes with their long lashes were full of a bright and earnest expression.

After a little pause, he placed the locket in her hand.

"This, of course, is yours; I found it to-day at the place where—where—I first had the pleasure of meeting you," said he, seeing that she shivered and half closed her eyes.

"Oh, do not speak of that place!" she exclaimed, lifting up her hands, "I shall never, never forget you or it either."

"I am sorry that the memory of me should be combined with a thought of horror."

"Do not imagine I shall think of *you* in that way," she said very earnestly; "and as for the locket—will you accept it—will you permit me to give it to you? Pray do. Papa will be so pleased!"

And springing to his side, the engaging creature, with rapid and deft little fingers, attached it to his watch-chain, exclaiming gleefully:

"Now, does it not look pretty?"

"Thanks, my dear Miss Clara," said Derval, looking almost tenderly into her bright upturned face; "but there is some-

thing that would make it look prettier and enhance its value to me."

"What?"

"A tiny lock of your hair, as a souvenir when I am far away from Bermuda."

"Oh—is that all!" she exclaimed, and with the scissors that lay near her she snipped off a tress and coiled it into the locket, laughing merrily the while. "You will come and see Papa again to-morrow, and let him thank you for me again," said she, interrupting Derval's thanks, and seeing that he had risen from his chair.

"For me there is no to-morrow, of leave at least—we must sail ere the tide ebbs, and make a good offing by sunset. And now," he added, yet lingeringly, "I must say good-bye."

"*Bon voyage*, Miss Sampler would say; but a pleasant voyage home to England I wish you with—with all my heart, Mr. Hampton," she said, as her smile died away, for recalling the episode which made them acquainted, the young girl's heart grew very full, and her beautiful eyes too.

"Will you give me one kiss ere I go?" said Derval, considering she was but a child he addressed.

"Oh yes!" was the frank response, as she innocently held up her mouth, and the memory of the kiss given by those sweet rosebud-like lips, haunted Derval pleasantly for many a month to come, when many a league of ocean lay between him and the Summer Isles.

Next day saw the *Amethyst* in the pilot's hands, working out of the tortuous channel between the reefs, her yards being braced up sharp, and her tacks being carried far aft to port and starboard alternately. As she passed in view of Government House the ports were triced up and she fired nineteen rounds from her brass nine-pounders in honour of Lord Oakhampton, the flag on whose residence was dipped to her three times in farewell.

By that time she was clear of all the rocks ; her yards were squared, and with a fair wind she bore away north-eastward into the evening sea, the watery highway to " Old England."

Some two months after this found Derval, after quitting the *Amethyst* at the West India Dock—ever in his mind associated with the awful day of London fog in which he first saw it—hastening homeward on a few weeks' leave, and having with him, sailor-like, presents for all there : a tiger-skin from the Cape for his father's study ; furs of the platypus, soft and grey, from Australia, to make muffs and cuffs for Mrs. Hampton, and a shawl for her too : a shark's skull for Mr. Asperges Laud ; a model junk for little Rookleigh ; several cosy things for old Patty Fripp ; and, moreover, he had shells, horns, idols, queer ornaments, and all the curious *omnium gatherum* which sailors usually pick up—the gathered spoil of years of wandering and affection.

He disliked to carry the locket where Clara's hands had hung it. A day might come—nay,



surely would come—when he might have to discard the gift, lest treasuring a woman's locket, with her name upon it and her hair within it, might alarm some one dearer to him than life, and lead to serious complications, although he had not met her yet—or thought so ; thus the locket was consigned to one of his secret repositories.

“ Home—home ! ” he exclaimed to himself, and clapped his hands with glee as the swift express train went tearing on through North Devon, and the vale of Taunton, with its foliaged slopes, Coddon Hill and St. Peter's ancient spire, came in sight ; on and on yet, and ere long he should be at Finglecombe !

Breathlessly he stood at the window of the carriage, in his eagerness hailing each successive familiar feature in the view. It was the close of a summer day, and his heart felt full as when he had knelt at his mother's knee to lisp the prayers she taught him. There seemed to be something in the white clouds flecking the blue sky ; in the sweet fresh breath of the land breeze, laden with the perfume of the orchards, the green leaves, and the flowers, in the joyous song of the birds ; in the pretty farms, in field after field as he saw them, like great green seas of grass, studded with golden buttercups and snow-white daisies ; in the groups of children, in the herds of cattle going to the pools to drink ; in the voice of the lark soaring aloft, in the familiar peal of the old church bell, like the voice of an early

friend : that all spoke to his brimming heart of England and of home !

At last the train went clanking into the station, where porters and passengers were hurrying to and fro, and in their hot haste jostling each other. Could this be Finglecombe ? Changes were being effected, and in progress, when he left ; but he was by no means prepared for all he saw now. There was no one to receive him on the platform, about which he looked as one in a dream. He arrived, as he had departed, unseen by the eye of a kinsman ; and now, for the first time, something of the old chill he had felt so often years ago, fell upon his heart.

A flaring placard, with views of Finglecombe, its terraces, villas, sea-wall, and various projected improvements then caught his eye. It was described as one of the most rising places on the western coast, in a beautiful district, commanding a view of the Bristol Channel ; for yachtsmen and canoeists possessing an unrivalled field, and attractive walks and drives for the excursionist or pedestrian ; a hotel, telegraph, and railway station, “ advantages showing that, as a centre or head-quarters for the tourist, Finglecombe was unrivalled indeed ; combining, as it did, cheapness of transit, and every means for amusement, with great natural beauty of situation.”

Had his father found the lamp of Aladdin to produce all this ? thought Derval, as memory went back to the solitary little cottage in the Combe, where a slice of brown

bread, a pat of golden butter, and a foaming jug of beer, were once deemed a luxurious supper.

The Hampton family had a carriage now ; but Derval, though expected, was left to make his way home, how he chose or how he could.

A porter put his portmanteaus on a truck, and, when desired to follow him to Mr. Hampton's house, received the order with profound respect. He was a stranger, and knew not Derval, whose own mother might not have recognised him now—tall, developed in every muscle, brown and manly in visage, with a dark, if slight, moustache ; but amid the “improvements” at the Combe he became so bewildered, that he was fain to “drop astern” and let the porter pilot him.

The handsome entrance gates were reached, and through the sweeping approach, gravelled to perfection, and bordered by shrubbery and flower-beds in all their splendour, Derval proceeded till he found himself, as one in a dream, before the beautiful villa, and as a portion of that dream, too, he found himself face to face with his father, who grasped his hand, yet gazed upon him with an expression in which astonishment at the change in his appearance, too evidently exceeded the emotion of welcome ; nor was it till Patty Fripp threw her arms round his neck, weeping over and kissing him, in an obstreperous fashion all her own, that the spell seemed broken, and that tears sprang to his own eyes, as the ready flood-gates of affection opened.

“His mother’s darling! his mother’s darling and mine!” she continued to exclaim. “Oh, Master Derval, Master Derval, how glad we are to have you safe home again!”

Derval felt a sense of mortification and disappointment. Of all the sudden and wonderful changes around him, he, the wandering sailor, had been kept in utter ignorance! Why was this? As a surprise for him, perhaps, hope suggested.

He found his father grayer, but less lined in visage than he could remember him, for prosperity had smoothed out many a line that Mary had seen growing, to her sorrow. Derval thought his manner nervous, and that he welcomed him, perhaps with affection, but certainly with outward constraint, especially when under the cold and observant eyes of Mrs. Hampton; and when the latter put her large, if white and shapely, hand into that of Derval, there flashed back upon his memory that which he had long forgotten—how viciously she flogged him in the stable with her riding-switch for poodling the cat.

She seemed quite unchanged since then, as young and handsome as ever, for no thought, care, or consideration would ever write a line on her smooth forehead and certainly brilliant face.

“This is your younger brother, Derval,” said his father, as Rookleigh came to take his place at the late dinner table. He had his mother’s expression of face; her light hazel eyes, only a little more green in tint and

shifty in expression, with short white lashes. Derval went to him cordially, though he was no longer like the sleeping baby over whom he had wept on the morning he left home, but a big hulking boy of eleven years old.

Rook, as they named him, eyed his elder brother sullenly, distrustfully, and even malevolently, for already had his mother contrived to implant in his dawning mind, that this tall sailor was a species of natural enemy; but his face lighted up and his manner softened, when this enemy put a handful of silver in his hand, and produced the model junk, some packets of sweetmeats, a jack-knife, shells, and many knick-knacks, brought specially for him from far beyond the sea; and eventually Master Rook, who coveted everything that Derval had to give, contrived to "screw" loose change out of him on every available occasion.

Greville Hampton listened with a curiously mingled expression in his face—disdain of, and indignation at, Lord Oakhampton, when Derval related the episode at Bermuda; and then something of real gratification stole into his features on thinking that the peer's daughter should owe her life and existence to the skill and prowess of *his* son! While, to anything in which Derval shone with credit, Mrs. Hampton listened coldly, with disdain nearly expressed in her light-coloured eyes, and had no word of womanly or well-bred approbation for the feat he had performed, and of which the only trophy he

chose to show, was the signet ring of Lord Oakhampton, with the three choughs under a coronet, at which Greville gave an angry grimace, and sat slowly stroking a huge beard he had cultivated since Derval last saw him.

“And so you like Captain Talbot and your ship, my boy?” said he, when Mrs. Hampton and her peculiar care had betaken them to the drawing-room, and to change the subject of the astounding alterations at Finglecombe, on which Derval had naturally been expatiating.

“Like the Captain? He is a genuine brick!” said Derval; “and as for our ship, no better sails the sea!”

“Fill your glass, Derval—that Burgundy is better than any we used to have long ago.”

“Thanks, Papa—‘Governor,’ I suppose I should call you in the parlance of the present day—even Rook, I perceive, has adopted it.”

“Bad form, I deem it—very.”

“Whatever I call you, you will ever be the same dear old man to me!” exclaimed Derval, as his eyes filled, and he wrung his father’s hand. “But I should like you to see the *Amethyst* under full sail before the wind, or even close hauled with her tacks aboard!” he added, with all a seaman’s genuine enthusiasm in a really good craft. “She does indeed skim the waves, as if she were the work of magic. I have often watched her, as Scott describes the Mertouns watching Cleveland’s vessel, as

‘ that rare masterpiece by which human genius aspires to surmount the waves and contend with the winds,’ and you must know that we sailors think that a ship, like a woman, has a will of her own, yet knows what the helmsman wants of her, so right was he who said ‘ she walks the waters like a thing of life ’—and this is precisely what the *Amethyst* does. Buoyant as a duck, when before the wind, I have seen her yard-arms nearly touch the great rollers on each side alternately ”

So multifarious were his father’s engagements, and so much was he pre-occupied by his schemes, that Derval soon found his own society could be spared, and one of his first acts was to visit the quaint old parsonage of the Tudor times, and present to Mr. Asperges Laud the grim natural curiosity he had for him—the head of a shark caught by Joe Grummet off Tristan d’Acunha, and which he had scraped and polished till he had rendered it, as he thought, a very high work of art indeed.

To reach the parsonage, he had to pass his mother’s grave, and as he approached the well-known spot, with his head uncovered, he experienced somewhat of a shock, it seemed so neglected and forgotten ; when under the Southern Cross, and far beyond the equator, how often had his prayerful thoughts come here, and how did he find it now ?

The tiny, but pretty monumental cross, erected by his father in the days of their limited means—then almost penury—had

fallen down, and the little patch of grass under which she lay was choked with weeds!

Even Mr. Asperges Laud had failed in the work of clearing and weeding it again and again—often with his own hands. But Derval resolved that not another day should pass, ere this desecration should end.

The kind old curate received him warmly and affectionately, as if he had been his own father, and with tears in his eyes, held up his hand to bless him.

Incidentally, he told him of the growing wealth of Finglecombe, and of the great fortune his father was amassing. Derval, who had naturally inferred that such was the case, now heard it distinctly for the first time, though he had been kept in ignorance of it; and, as naturally, he again asked of himself, why was this the case?

He strove to crush down the unpleasant suspicions of—he knew not what—that would occur to him again and again, and sought to enjoy to the full the brief term of his leave of absence. He sought all his old haunts, but only to find changes; the shingly shore, which he had been wont to seek for hours, and whence he saw the old weedy hull floating silently in the bay, was now giving place to a sea-wall and marine parade; the Druidical stones that formed the Pixies Parlour had become road metal, and the new hotel occupied its site; the haunted mill with its moss-grown wheel had given place to a new villa of astounding design; and he found nothing unchanged but



the Tiws-stone, or rock, named after the Saxon god (of the third day of the week), on the summit of a hill, where in the deep snows of winter, it is said, that on certain nights are traced the marks of a naked human foot, and of a cloven hoof, while the shrieks of the "whist hounds" are heard with the winding of unearthly horns, in the hollow below the hill.

So for a time, a very little time, he gave himself up to the full enjoyment of the sleepy country life, which was so unlike what he had been leading for fully four years past.

Yet in his father's house he felt singularly homeless; by the side of him whose blood he inherited and of the brother whose blood he partly shared, he felt as one without kindred, and ever and anon the thought occurred to him, "What brought me here? I had no pressing invitation certainly; let me get back to the *Amethyst* again!"

Still stronger grew this desire, when one day he overheard his step-mother say:

"Greville dear, we must not have him with us long—with his sea manners and ways; his oaths, no doubt, will come in time, and the mode of treating the servant-maids too; for even they, and the ladies he may meet, are so different to all he is accustomed to."

"Who sent him to sea?" asked her husband curtly, for her remarks were alike unjust and untrue; but though they had a circle of rather fashionable friends now, Derval was conscious that none were invited to meet

him ; and thus coldness on the part of those who should have made him welcome, requests often refused, and lectures from Mrs. Hampton, in a tone unsuited to a lad past eighteen years, provoked a certain spirit of resistance in Derval. So far were slights carried, that one day during his father's absence young Rookleigh was placed at the head of the table. To see a boy of eleven years of age there, made Derval laugh, but, as Selden says, "you may see by a straw which way the wind is," and the preference was only a part and parcel of her whole system.

One morning, shortly before the time for his departure came, there occurred two events—or one, we should say, as each was but a part of the other—which gave Derval some food for reflection.

Among the letters for post on the hall-table, he saw one in Mrs. Hampton's handwriting, addressed to "Reeve Rudderhead, Esq., Mate, Ship *Amethyst*, West India Dock, London."

"Who the dickens is he?" thought Derval ; "we have no such man, and it is improbable that there are two ships of the same name in the same dock."

He inquired of Mrs. Hampton who this Rudderhead was.

"He has succeeded Mr. Girtline in your ship."

"As first mate?"

"Yes."

"Who told you of this?"

“My aunt Rookleigh, by letter.”

“And about what are you writing to him?” asked Derval, so abruptly or suspiciously, that she coloured with annoyance and said :

“That is *my* business; besides, he is my cousin-german, and was an admirer of mine in my girlish days,” she added, and left the room.

Soon after Derval was in the library, penning a letter to Hal Bowline, and while doing so, the appearance of his own name on the blotting-pad, several times, in Mrs. Hampton’s handwriting, attracted his attention, and very naturally excited his curiosity. The blotting-paper was new, yellow tinted, and clean otherwise, and anxious to know in what way she was interested in his affairs, he deemed himself quite entitled to examine into the matter; and he could make out, by the address which was thereto, that the fragments he could decipher were part of his step-mother’s letter to her nautical cousin, Mr. Reeve Rudderhead, and though unconnected, they ran thus :—

“ . so Derval, you see, is . . . y, and for  
the old love you bore me . . . good round sum, rid  
 . him in any way . . . bad and evil . . . see  
him no more, again . . . .”

Derval read these strange fragments between him and the light again and again, till he fairly committed them to memory. He could not make out the mystery, or why she should be writing about him in any way. He

quite failed to understand it, nor could he exactly speak of it, but he had good reason to remember it when several degrees of latitude lay between him and Finglecombe.

He felt that his visit there had been a mistake; that his father was all but alienated from him by a step-mother who wickedly hated him; that his step-brother was a greedy, sullen, and most unlikeable youth. Thus, more than ever, was his loving heart thrust back upon itself. Why was all this? What had he done beyond the crime of being the eldest son of his father, that his own flesh and blood should treat him thus?

He had but one unalloyed satisfaction during his visit. He received the Albert Medal for saving the life of Lord Oakhampton's daughter, and as he looked on it, his heart reverted again to the bright little maid in that isle of "Vexed Bermoothes," and he wished that the *Amethyst* had been bound for that region again, instead of Van Dieman's Land, or Tasmania as we name it now.

So the hour of his departure came, and with heedlessness and mortification curiously mingling in his heart, he once more quitted his home, on the very day preceding one which Mrs. Hampton had fixed for a brilliant dinner-party, and when she knew that Derval must, without fail, be on board his ship.

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## CHAPTER VI.

“A WET SHEET AND A FLOWING SEA.”

ANOTHER long spell of the sea, including several voyages and some stirring adventures, was before Derval now, with a protracted absence from Britain. The ship was not getting ready for sea, so Captain Talbot was on shore, when a hansom cab deposited Derval and his belongings close by the gangway that led on board, where he was warmly welcomed by Joe Grummet and Harry Bowline.

“So Girtline has left us, Hal?”

“Yes, in bad health.”

“And what sort of fellow is his successor?” asked Derval as they descended to the cabin.

“He is simply horrid—a cad, a brute!” exclaimed Bowline. “He is in the hold just now, and if a cask fell out of the slings on his head, it would be a good thing for all on board. He is so different from poor Girtline; he looks like an old pirate, and has stopped our promotion; but you see, Hampton, the owners think us rather young for further

advancement yet. Steward, a couple of grogs; the sun is over the fore-yard!"

"When do we sail?"

"I don't exactly know, but I wish we saw Blue Peter up!"

"This Rudderhead—" began Derval, thinking of the mysterious letter.

"You'll have enough of him in time, I doubt not. He has already caused much ill-blood on board."

"How?"

"He plays the tyrant in the Captain's absence; he has stopped the men's grog for next to nothing, though he is seldom quite sober himself; he sent two of the apprentices aloft, and had them lashed to the topgallant shrouds, in sight of all the people; and, like a beast as he is, had the lashings wetted that they might *shrink*, a trick he must have picked up in the Canton river! He refused Joe Grummet leave, and me too, though there was no duty to do but the anchor-watch," said Bowline, referring to the two or three men appointed to look after a ship while at anchor or in port. "But hush! here he comes lumbering down the companion-ladder — screwed, I have no doubt."

Step by step he came down, his large splay feet, thick legs, the broader part of his person, his great back, short neck, and bullet-like head all appearing in succession. He looked full and scrutinisingly at the new-comer, while Hal, taking off his cap, bowed to each, and said mockingly :

“Mr. Derval Hampton—Mr. Reeve Rudderhead; Mr. Reeve Rudderhead—Mr. Derval Hampton.”

The first mate eyed both viciously, particularly Bowline, who finished his grog, and eyeing him defiantly in turn, went slowly on deck, singing as he went a grotesque song :

“We bore away to the Greenland seas till we saw a  
mighty whale,  
The tremendous length of which, 'tis said, did reach  
from the head to the tail, brave boys !  
The captain on the bowsprit stood, with the mainmast  
in his hand :  
‘Overhaul, overhaul ! let the main-deck fall, and belay  
her to the land, brave boys !’”

Mr. Rudderhead meanwhile seated himself on a locker and leisurely proceeded to fill a clay pipe, while quite as leisurely surveying Derval. He was a piratical, bull-dog looking fellow, about forty years of age, with a broad swollen visage, which, where it was not red by grog blossoms and blotches, was covered by cuts and scars, won in fisticuff battles in the vicinity of Wapping or the docks. His figure was powerful and suggestive of enormous brutal strength. His appearance was repugnant and dirty; he wore the kind of uniform prescribed by Curry & Co. for the officers of their ships, but it was evidently a second-hand suit, and was already greasy, foul, and frayed.

As his eyes met those of Derval, the latter felt, “by instinct swift as light,” that he was

face to face with an enemy—a worse one than Paul Bitts—who was, moreover, the cousin of his hostile step-mother, and no doubt in frequent communication with her.

“Oho!” said he, scraping a match and lighting his pipe; “so you are Derval Hampton, eh?”

“I am, as yet, Mr. Derval Hampton to you, sir,” said our hero sharply.

“I beg your pardon, *Mister* Hampton,” said he, lifting his cap impertinently

“Yes; and I am third mate of this ship.”

“I am the *first*, which you’ll find out in time, so let us know each other at once. I am a sharp hand at my duty, and stand no nonsense—so keep a bright look-out, I say!” he added, adopting a bullying tone, as he had evidently been drinking; and he interlarded his conversation with many “strange oaths,” which we cannot commit to paper.

“You are, I understand, a cousin of my step-mother?” said Derval, not unwilling to try and conciliate this truculent fellow, with whom his lot would be unluckily cast for some time.

“Yes, first cousin; and she told me to look very particularly after you.”

“Indeed—very kind of her! But I can look pretty well after myself, and others to.”

“I believe you are apt to cut up rough on occasions, and lay out to windward if you can.”

“Indeed!” said Derval, his choler rising.



"And I was to see that you did your duty well, to ship and owners."

"I can do my duty without need of your supervision," said Derval, annoyed still more by the peculiar tone this obnoxious personage adopted.

"And so can I, though I don't belong to the Royal Naval Reserve," said he with a sneer.

"Nor are ever likely to do so, unless you mend your manners and your morals too."

"What the—what do you know about me or my morals?" demanded Rudderhead, with a black look; "you lubberly haymaker!"

"I can guess much—we guess much about ships that go down, though we may not be certain about them."

"*Down*—what do you mean by or about down—any particular ship?" asked the other hoarsely, and with a terrible oath, while his face grew pale, all save the pimples and blotches, and his eyes glared like those of a rattlesnake.

"I mean precisely what my words infer," replied Derval disdainfully, as he quitted the cabin and went on deck, convinced that he had, by a random speech, probed some dark secret in this man's life, and stung him in some way; and in the time to come he gained a clue to it.

How a woman so refined and lady-like as Mrs. Hampton—for she was both in appear-

ance, unquestionably—came to have such a remarkable kinsman it was difficult to say; but from that hour there was a declared feud between him and Derval, and both were prepared to carry it out to the bitter end.

Derval's indignation was very keen. Through all the years he had been away from home, the tender home-love had never died in his honest and passionate heart. To Finglecombe he had sent all he could give—letters, presents, and many a token of regard; but all in vain; and now she, who had driven him from that home—a luxurious one now—had found him an enemy, and a dangerous one, in the truculent savage, Reeve Rudderhead.

Derval hailed the return of the Captain on board with right good welcome. He was warmly welcomed by the latter, who said:

“I saw by the *London Gazette*, and other papers, that Her Majesty had, at the request of Lord Oakhampton, given you the Albert Medal for saving his girl's life! Long may you live to wear it, Derval; but now you must, like me, join the Reserve; you'll just be able to manage your training before we sail.”

This was exactly suited to the young man's tastes and ambition; so Derval was duly commissioned as a midshipman on board H.M. training ship *President*, appeared in his uniform as such, with the Albert Medal on his right breast, and performed twenty-eight

days drill, under the Gunnery Lieutenant, messing with the officers in the ward room.

This brief sojourn on board Her Majesty's ship, while so much active and even dirty work (which Derval luckily escaped) was being done in the *Amethyst*, roused the ready wrath and jealousy of Mr. Reeve Rudderhead to boiling heat against him ; and consequently, when Derval again appeared on her deck, he was greeted by that personage in this manner :—

“ Now, then, Mister Derval Hampton, as you have done us the honour of coming aboard again, you'll perhaps take off that dandy gold ring of yours, with the three crows—or are they three mudlarks?—on it ; and go aloft and see to greasing down the foretop-mast, and setting up the maintop-mast backstay.”

“ Very good, sir,” said Derval, passing on.

“ A gold ring ! ” muttered the bully, aside ; “ I'll warrant him as perfect a cock-pit beau as ever foundered in the lee-scuppers.”

“ What is the difference between foundering and going down ? ” asked Derval, as a Parthian shot, remembering how curiously the word had stung his enemy before, and a terrible scowl darkened the face of the latter, as he turned away grumbling one of his deep maledictions.

The cargo was complete now, and the ship was ready for sea ; all the running rigging had been examined, and that which was unfit for service removed, and new rigging

rove in its place, together with the studding gear, and "the chaffing gear," which consists of roundings or mats, battens, put upon the rigging and spars to prevent their being frayed, was all arranged under the eyes of Joe Grummet, as the ship dropped down the river, and was again taken into the Channel by old Toggle the Deal pilot.

After the two lights on the Lizard Point—the last they saw of England—melted out in distance and the obscurity of a February night, and the *Amethyst* was altogether clear of the English Channel, the weather became delightful, the water smooth, the skies clear, and as the wind was fair, she ran before it merrily, without tack or sheet being lifted, till the latitudes of balmy breezes and sunny days in long succession were reached.

Every other day vessels were passed, but after a time the seas became more lonely, and for many a day no sail would be in sight; and then a succession of foul winds took the *Amethyst* considerably out of her course, and to the westward.

The crew of a vessel while at sea is generally divided in two portions, called the starboard and port watches. The former, in a merchant ship, is the captain's watch, but is frequently commanded by the second mate; the other, the larboard or port watch, falls to the chief mate; and the periods of time occupied by each part of the crew alternately, while thus on duty, are also termed watches.

One night, after Fogo—one of the Cape de Vere Islands—had been passed, with its volcano 9,000 feet above the sea, all aflame as it now generally is, after fifty years of silence, Mr. Rudderhead was so long of coming on deck to relieve Captain Talbot, who had the starboard watch from 8 to 12, that he sent Derval below to rouse him up.

Under all circumstances Derval disliked coming in contact with this man, who was a dark and repellent fellow, haunted in his sleep by nightmares and dreams, amid which ever and anon—as sometimes when he was irritated by day—he would mutter horribly of some ship going down with all hands on board.

As Derval entered the cabin, it was lighted only by a swinging lamp in the skylight, where, with the tell-tale compass, it vibrated to and fro with every roll of the ship, and as he made his way towards the berth, where the first mate lay fast asleep with his clothes on, all ready to turn out, he became aware that Rudderhead was in one of his drunken slumbers, for he had a store of spirits in his own baggage, and often imbibed so much as to endanger the ship when in his care.

He lay on his back, his repulsive visage half seen and half sunk in shadow by the partial light of the cabin lamp, and was evidently haunted by one of his peculiar dreams just then, and was muttering about a ship called the *North Star*.

At first he was actually smiling, and then an expression of intense cunning and gratification stole over his face as he muttered—

“Good, good, I understand . . . the Marine Insurance must stump up . . . all the boats gone save one, save *one*,” he said, in a husky whisper; “all but mine—mine! . . . alongside. Where’s the auger? . . . here . . . now, now, through outer and inner sheathing . . . there is one!” and his clenched hands revolved over each other as in fancy he grasped the cross handle of an auger, and in fancy—could Derval doubt it?—was piercing a ship’s side. “Three, four, five . . . off, off . . . now she begins to settle in the water . . . they find she is going down . . . now to scull for the shore . . . four miles . . . How they shriek, and cry, and howl . . . How pale their faces look in the moonlight . . . they threaten, rave, and implore me to return . . . no help for them . . . down they go . . . down, down, down, and now they all come up with their dead faces and white hands out of the green sea. They glare at me on every side . . . they grasp the gunwale of my boat—they clutch me . . . Merciful Heaven!”

His mutterings terminated in a wail of horror, then came prayers, with maledictions on himself and others, as he writhed on his bed; and in the agony produced by his dream, which seemed to reach a climax of unutterable horror, while a cold and clammy sweat distilled upon his brow, and his muscular limbs shivered like aspen twigs, he

awoke and half sprang out of his berth; but the effect of his vision overcame him, and for a moment he sank back on the pillow, panting rather than breathing.

On seeing that Derval was regarding him, and conscious that he must have been muttering though knowing not what he might have said, a sudden expression of alarm, mingled with defiance and malevolence, came into his face, and he staggered up.

"I have been dreaming," said he.

"So I see," observed Derval.

"See—what did you *hear*? I mutter odd things in my sleep, I am told. Those who hear them are not lucky. The last fellow who did so was lost *overboard* in the night," he added, with a diabolical grin.

Derval was silent.

"Speak, I tell you," bullied the other.

"Captain's orders are that you are instantly to relieve the deck; eight bells in the first watch have struck," said Derval, sharply, and went on deck, merely reporting that Mr. Rudderhead was coming, and the new watch was already on deck.

Derval acted with judicious care in not telling the first mate all he had heard; but the latter knew what was too often his use and wont, to mutter in his sleep, and thus a species of dread of Derval was added to his ill-concealed hatred of him.

The latter confided to Harry Bowline and to the boatswain the strange revelations Rudderhead had made in his sleep.

“The *North Star*, the *North Star*!” exclaimed Grummet, as he slapped his thigh, and with a gulp of astonishment, by which he nearly swallowed his quid; “why that’s the very ship as was said to have foundered four miles off the Scilly Isles, after losing all her boats save one, in which Rudderhead, her second mate, reached St. Mary’s, and I don’t think the Mercantile Marine Insurance would have ‘stumped up,’ as he calls it, without a fight for it. I have heard him muttering in his dreams. I wish he was well out of the ship, that I do; good can’t come to us with such a thief on board. My eyes! how many a better man has swung in Execution dock, and had his poor bones chained to those stumps, as we may see any day by the Essex marshes. I never liked the cut of his jib.”

To Derval it was evident that what he had overheard was no dream or nightmare, simple and pure, but the recollection of a real event—the scuttling of the *North Star*, and leaving her to sink with all hands on board, the result of some foul scheme between himself and someone else; and now there took possession of him a great horror of this man, with whom he had to sit at table, and to converse and confer incidentally while conducting mutually the duty of the ship.

That the untoward incident of Derval coming upon him in his dream dwelt in the mate’s memory, was evident, as the former frequently caught the latter regarding him with a stern and lowering eye when he thought



his attention was turned another way; and once, when the mate was partially intoxicated, and had crept into the long-boat amidships to keep out of the captain's sight, Derval, who was busy near the mainmast, heard him muttering—

“Dreams—a curse upon them! Why will they haunt me? Well, well, let him suspect what he likes, but he can prove nothing, and no one can prove anything, and dead men tell no tales, as *he* may find out one day. She wrote me to serve him out in any fashion to suit her; but (here he uttered a terrible oath) I'll serve him out to suit myself.”

*She* was, Derval never for a moment doubted, Mrs. Hampton. Thus he found that to avoid scrapes, to avoid tyranny, and to escape positive peril, would require all his care, all his caution and perseverance now.

Reeve Rudderhead was, we have said, a man of enormous strength, bulk, and stature; every muscle and fibre in his form had been developed and turned, as it were, to iron and wire. He was decidedly a fellow to fear physically, and to shun morally. He was quite capable of working anyone a fatal mischief whom he disliked, or who crossed him in the least way, and the contingencies of a seafaring life afford such a character many easy chances for doing so with impunity; thus Derval did not forget his hint and threat about the listener who was lost overboard.

But there were other risks to run on which he did not calculate.

Thus, one day, a top-maul, or large iron hammer kept up aloft for driving in or out the fid of the topmasts, came whizzing down from the mizen-top, where Rudderhead was supposed to be busy on something or other. It crashed upon the quarter-deck, close by where Derval was standing, and *then* followed the cry which always precedes anything being thrown from aloft:—

“Stand from under,” sang out Rudderhead.

Derval felt himself grow pale, while a fierce gust of wrath rose in his breast, for this could not have been a chance occurrence, but a deliberate attempt to destroy him accidentally, as it were, in open daylight, and in the face of the crew; and there was an unconcealed grin on the visage of Rudderhead when rebuked by Captain Talbot for carelessness, and while making his sham excuses to Derval.

The latter thought deeply over the correspondence between Mrs. Hampton and her amiable cousin, and recalled the fragments of the letter he traced on the blotting pad, and he now could but construe or connect them thus: that they were to the effect that as he, Derval, was in the way (of whom, Rookleigh?), Rudderhead, for the old love he bore her, and for a good round sum, would rid her of him in any mode he chose, so that they might see him no more.

It was impossible to doubt now that such had been the tenor of that atrocious epistle. It might be, Derval thought in his calmer

moments, that she did not mean a deadly crime to be committed to remove him from jarring with her son's interests, and that the affair of the maul was dictated by Reeve Rudderhead's own spirit of malevolence and revenge.

But what could she mean? unless it were that Rudderhead was to contrive to leave him ashore in some place where he might perish or never more be heard of; or if, when some such contingency as a tumble overboard befel him, to be in no hurry to throw him a line or cut away the life-buoy. Anyway, Derval was now completely on his guard.

He remembered how his predecessor, Paul Bitts—an enemy from the hour he joined the ship—by his cruelty, tyranny, and terror, had blotted out the short life of poor little Tom Titford on that terrible night at Fernando Noronha; and he wondered if some such untoward fate might befall himself at the hands of this unscrupulous wretch. But then Tom Tit, as they called him, was but a child compared with what Derval was now, and he resolved, as he said to Harry Bowline, “to keep his weather-eye remarkably wide open.”

As for his growing inheritance, sailor like, he set no store on it then, and actually cared little, if he always had a ship, whether every shilling of it went to Rookleigh, the failings in whose disposition and character seemed to soften by time and distance, and often in lone watches of the night did Derval think he would try to love him, when the selfish little

Rook of the nursery became, like himself, a man. Was he not his brother, and, moreover, the nearest kinsman he had on earth? They had the same father, though different mothers—oh, so different! Yes, yes, a day would come when Rook would cease to be under his mother's influence, and the bonds of fraternal affection would naturally strengthen between them as years rolled on.

Alas! Could Derval have foreseen the future!

About the time when the *Amethyst* began to feel the main equatorial current, one evening the sea, which had been as smooth as the Serpentine in Hyde Park on a summer day, suddenly became torn up by a hurricane, which a rapid fall in the barometer indicated, but scarcely in time for preparations to meet it.

The wind seemed to come from all quarters at once, as if contending for mastery, and the spray flew over the ship in blinding clouds. The weightiest blast struck her on the lee bow, and, as the yards were braced that way, she was nearly thrown on her beam ends.

"Hold on!" was the shout that went from stem to stern, and every man grasped something to prevent himself being swept overboard.

For nearly a minute the ship lay in the same position, when she righted a little, and then payed off before the blast, when Joe Grummet joined the man at the wheel.

Darkness came on with more than tropical rapidity. Luckily the royals had not been set, and topsails, close-reefed, were lowered upon the caps, while the vessel drove before her courses and fore-staysail.

"We are in for a rough night," said Mr. Rudderhead grimly, as he tied the strings of a yellow south-wester under his chin. "A night as may make some beggar lose the number of his mess, if it don't send us all to Davy Jones's locker before morning."

Twice during this short speech his eye wandered, perhaps unconsciously, to Derval; but, as the event proved, the night was to have more terror for himself than any man on board.

The sea which, from the commencement of the hurricane, had been roused into boiling surge, dashed over the ship without a moment's cessation, though she must have been going at the rate of twelve knots an hour, but as the light in the binnacle was extinguished by the tempest, no one could tell for some time which way her head lay; and for a time such was the black fury of the hurricane, that the look-out ahead could not see half the vessel's length from her, so thick were the clouds of spray raised by the force of the wind, and meanwhile the whole deck was flooded, and everything loose went washing away to leeward.

From time to time Derval thought of Rudderhead, and while doing his duty kept on his guard. Amid the hubbub and obscurity of

such time there was more than one opportunity of working mischief.

Thunder, lightning, and rain were all in full chorus together for more than an hour, during which very little was said by one man to another, save brief orders, or hurried remarks.

"I think there is a little lull, sir," said Rudderhead to the Captain; "shall we keep our wind?"

"I think you are right—she is a weatherly craft, and makes little leeway. Luff her to, then!" shouted Talbot, through his trumpet.

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when a great black sea came thundering like a mountain over the weather gangway, nearly tearing the long-boat from its chocks, straining and starting the lashing of the weather guns, beating open two of the lee ports, and nearly sweeping away everything movable. The hurricane now abated a little; but the *Amethyst* had scarcely a stitch of canvas set, yet the yards being braced up sharply, kept her steady, while ever and anon brilliant flashes of green lightning cast a ghastly glare upon the seething water, and appalling booms of thunder hurtled through the sky, to die away in distance.

About three bells, in the middle watch, there came a cry from the look-out man ahead—

"Sail on the weather bow!"

She had been revealed by a flash of lightning, and was, Harry Bowline reported, about half a mile off.

In such a tempest it might be necessary to give her as wide a berth as possible, and several night-glasses were in requisition, scanning the quarter indicated; and, among others, Derval, with his left arm round one of the fore-shrouds, kept his binocular intently to his eyes, on the look-out.

Flash after flash came in rapid succession, vivid, green, and ghastly, and with each they could all see the stranger, whom they neared fast, and made out to be a brig with her topmasts gone, her canvas split to ribbons. Bobbing up and down, she was visible only for an instant at a time, and chill fell on all who saw her, for she was evidently an old wreck, with no living being on board of her, though a dead man was seen lashed in the starboard main-shrouds, and three other corpses were dangling from lashings in the foretop.

No sound or cry came from that ghostly craft as the *Amethyst* swept past her within a few yards of her stern, just as one more than usually vivid flash showed her distinctly, with her torn rigging all hanging in bights and loops, the dead-lights shipped in her cabin windows, and her name painted in white letters underneath them.

"Could any of you make out her name?" asked Captain Talbot, as the flash passed away, and the wreck seemed to vanish, when the thunder burst fearfully overhead.

"I did, sir," replied Derval.

"You are very clever, Hampton. Did any-

one else make it out? I should like to be sure, for the log-book."

There was no reply from anyone else, and Derval was silent, for he had a choking sensation in his throat.

"I should like to have some other warrant for her name, ere I put it in the log, than Mr. Derval Hampton's," sneered Rudderhead.

"And what did you make out her name to be?" asked Talbot.

"*The North Star*," replied Derval, for such was indeed the name he had seen.

"*What?*" roared Rudderhead, in a voice that startled all. "It is a lie—a horrid lie! He could not have made it out in this obscurity."

"How dare you say so?" asked Captain Talbot.

"I am sure of what I assert, sir," said Derval, careless of how his words affected his enemy; she is *The North Star*, of *Whitchurch*."

Something between a groan and a curse escaped the lips of Rudderhead, whose perplexity Derval really shared, but with much of awe, while the former felt much of rage and hatred, believing, almost hoping, that the name was Derval's invention, and suggested, perhaps, by some remark overheard in the dream, on the night he was too late to relieve the deck.

"*The North Star*," and "of *Whitchurch*" too! Was it a reality, or a phantom ship sent to blast the eye-sight and terrify the heart of Reeve Rudderhead?



Any way, it was a strange and startling coincidence, the whole episode, and the perfect similitude of the name with that of the vessel of his dreams, or his crime. This, together with the terrible circumstances under which she had been seen, had, for a time, a calming effect upon the brutal temper and spirit of the first mate, whose entry of the circumstances in the log, together with the details of how the *Amethyst* was handled in the hurricane, proved nearly illegible, so tremulous and uncertain was the handwriting.

As daylight broke, the hurricane passed away and the clouds cleared; but not a vestige of the wreck was to be seen, so those who swept the horizon with their glasses for her could but conclude that she had gone down, with her dead, in the night.

The sea was still running very high, and the *Amethyst*, having no canvas set, rolled very heavily. The morning watch, whose duty extends from 4 to 8 A.M., was now on deck.

"Away aloft and cast loose the topsails," was now the Captain's order; "hoist away, lads—up to the cross-trees with them." The courses were then let fall, and pleasantly and steadily the ship bore on, rolling away before the wind.

Derval, who had never mentioned the matter of the first mate's dreams and nocturnal visits to the Captain, had much difficulty in assuring Hal Bowline and Joe Grummet that the name he had given was that which he had really seen; for the boat-

swain was especially unbelieving. He laughed loudly again and again, slapped his thigh vigorously, and Derval's back too, supposing that the name was all an invention for the purpose of "giving that piratical beggar a dig—hitting him on the raw," and so forth; but the episode elicited, as usual at sea, a number of anything but enlivening or hilarious anecdotes, concerning wrecks and marvels of the deep.

"The last time I saw any dead bodies adrift upon the sea," said Joe, "was just before I shipped aboard this here craft. We had left Sidney in June, bound for Shanghai, and had fair winds till we reached latitude 6, south, when the glass fell low, the sea rose and the wind too, for we lost our fore-topmast, which snapped off at the cap like a clay-pipe. The gale increased, so we hauled to the wind on the port tack, under a close-reefed foresail, main-topsail, and fore-staysail, and plenty of cormorants were flying about us and perching on the yard-arms. When the gale abated, and all but the watch were thankfully about to turn in, there was a cry of 'Wreck to leeward!' and there came drifting past us a raft made of planks, poles, and spars, on which was a poor wretch, almost naked as he came into the world, famished, starving, and well-nigh raving mad, the last survivor of only four unfortunate fellows who had escaped from a sinking ship. On the second day the ship sank, one of the men fell off the raft into the water, and was devoured by sharks under the

eyes of the three survivors, around whom the sea-lawyers began to gather on every side. A second man died from exhaustion, and the other two threw him into the sea, hoping that then the sharks would go and leave them in peace. But the taste of human flesh seemed to increase their longings, and their numbers also, and still more when the third man fell dead on the raft and his mess-mate was too weak to throw him into the sea. They seemed to swarm up out of the deep now on every side; they crowded round the frail raft, which was level with the water, so that every wave rolled over it. Eagerly the sharks watched its only occupant on every hand, their dorsal fins quivering with hungry longings, their rows of awful teeth glittering head over head, side by side, in close ranks. Look which way he might, he saw nothing but eyes and teeth—eyes and teeth—and for well-nigh a week this lasted. He could neither sleep nor lie down, for dread of falling into the sea and being rent piece-meal. The hot sun of these scorching latitudes beat all day long upon his defenceless head; he was without food or water at last, and when we got him aboard was well-nigh a raving lunatic, and he had terrible dreams at night, like our friend in the cabin—dreams of sharp teeth and eyes, sharp teeth and glistening eyes, for long after. Another day of such work and we might have found him like his mess-mate, as the newspapers say, ‘with the wital spark extinct.’”

Greatly to the disgust and annoyance of

Mr. Rudderhead, Captain Talbot, having as we have said, a proportion of Royal Naval Reserve men on board, when the weather was fine, was fond of training the crew to the guns and small arms, making and shortening sail, reefing topsails, and otherwise manœuvring the ship; and when she was about the latitude of St. Helena, it would seem as if the skill and mettle of her crew were on the point of being tangibly proved.

Foul winds, as stated, had driven the *Amethyst* considerably to the westward of her course. One day, in the early part of the morning watch, Derval was regarding with pleasure, as he often did, the strange beauty of the early day-break on the vast and wide expanse of ocean. The first streaks of grey and then yellow light stretched for miles and miles along the horizon eastward, indicating the line where sky and ocean met; throwing a broadening sheet of radiance upon the face of the undulating deep, imparting a weird beauty to it, which, as a writer says, combined with the boundlessness and unknown depth of the sea around you, “gives one a feeling of loneliness, of dread, and of melancholy foreboding, which nothing else in nature can give.”

Day broke and brightened fast, and the *Amethyst* was on a wind, with topsails, courses, jib, and spanker set, when suddenly the cry, which always attracts attention on board ship, “Sail ho!” was given by one of the watch.

"Where?" demanded Derval.

"Right astern, sir."

Derval took the glass from the cleats, where it hung in the companion, and saw a vessel, equal in tonnage evidently to the *Amethyst*, heading directly after her, with every stitch of canvas spread. She was a great clipper-built brigantine.

"She is following us, certainly," said one of the men.

"What can she want with us?" asked another.

"Has lost her reckoning—or is out of water or something else," suggested the first speaker.

"Are you going to shorten sail, and let her come up with us?" asked Harry Bowline.

"Certainly not without orders," said Derval; "go below and report this to the Captain."

In a few minutes Captain Talbot came on deck, and took the glass from Derval's hand. After a time, he said:

"I make her out to be a sharp-bowed or clipper-built barque or brigantine, with a small mast rigged aft, with an enormous fore and aft mainsail; she is about 600 tons or more, and full of men—very full of men, for a merchant vessel."

"How far is she astern, sir?"

"About eight miles—I can see the water curling white under her fore-foot."

"She shows no colours or signal."

"Which she would be sure to do if she

wished to speak to us; any way, we'll show her ours. Run up the ensign."

No response was made to this, and the blue flag of the Naval Reserve floated out in vain from the gaff; and the silent craft, with its crowded deck, came steadily on, and was overhauling the *Amethyst* so fast that ere long, as the distance between them lessened, many coloured and even black faces could be seen among her crew.

"She does not require to speak with us, sir," said Joe Grummet; "she would show her colours else."

"Then what the devil does she mean by keeping in our wake in this fashion?" said Captain Talbot testily.

"Her crew crowd her deck as thick as bees," observed Joe, when the whole flush line of the stranger's deck could be seen, as her head went down into the trough of the sea and her stern rose alternately. The whole of the *Amethyst's* company were on deck now, and the strange craft was an object of undivided attention.

"In these days of steam," said Captain Talbot, with a smile that was not quite a smile, "one may well think that a pirate is as much a thing of the past as a slaver in these seas; but the bearing of this craft is very suspicious, and we must risk nothing with a cargo so valuable."

Joe Grummet, who had been looking at her from the mizen-rigging, now reported that she had portlids partly triced up, and that right

amidships she had something covered by a tarpaulin that was certainly *not* a boat, and, if not a boat, was very probably a long-range gun, and that she had a Chilian or Brazilian look about her, "that with the coloured lot on her deck certainly suggested that it would be as well to give her as wide a berth as possible."

"Cast loose the royal," ordered Captain Talbot, "and set the fore and main studding sails, and the topgallant studding sails."

This was all speedily done, and the ship began to tear through the water, on which the brigantine set her square main topsail, but still did not show her colours.

"It is clearly a case of chase, and had she not such a crowd of men—by Jove! I would lie to and try conclusions with her," said Captain Talbot, whose cheek flushed, and whose eyes sparkled with excitement.

To make the sails draw better, he now ordered water to be thrown on them, and to wet them down by buckets whipped up to the masthead. He then ordered the vessel's course to be changed more than once, but the craft in pursuit changed hers in the same manner, and by noon was drawing nearer and nearer.

Matters were becoming serious now, and the excitement on the *Amethyst* was increasing. Captain Talbot next ordered the guns to be cast loose, the powder and small arms to be brought on deck, with the cutlasses and revolvers, and a grim expression of something

very like satisfaction mingled with defiance became visible on the faces of the men, as they buckled on their waist-belts and filled their cartridge-boxes.

“Hurrah!” cried Joe Grummet, applying the edge of a cutlass to his hard, brown palm; “we’ll tip them a twist of the Royal Naval Reserve.”

“I hope it won’t come to that Grummet,” said the Captain seriously; “she has ten men for each of us evidently.”

In the tasks of setting more canvas and wetting it all down from aloft, none had been more active than Mr. Reeve Rudderhead, but his bearing became very nervous and restless when he saw the lines of the guns laid across the deck, the rammers and sponges laid by their sides, the port tackles triced to the lids, and expected every moment to hear Captain Talbot issue an order to throw the ship in the wind.

The latter, however, had no such intention if it could be avoided. He continued dead before the wind with all his yards squared, knowing well that a square-rigged vessel always sailed better so, while fore and aft vessels have most speed *on* a wind; moreover, as the breeze was light, he spread more canvas than the chase could do, having royals, fourteen studding-sails, and sky-sails fore and aft.

The entire day all hands remained on deck, and what food they had was all taken there. The wind varied a good deal and fell light



sometimes on board the *Amethyst*, while, as if by ill-luck, the chase seemed to have it steadily, and was provokingly enabled to preserve her distance—about two miles.

“Look out!” cried Rudderhead, ducking below the gunnel, as a white puff spirted out from the black bow of the stranger, and a shot, which came ricochetting along the wave-tops, dropped into the water far astern of the *Amethyst*.

“A hint of what is in store for us,” said Captain Talbot; and by sunset she was still coming on, bringing the freshing breeze with her, and the snow-white foam seemed to curl higher and higher round the bright copper that flashed upon her bows.

It was with an emotion of considerable relief that, after a day of such excitement, Captain Talbot saw the sun of the tropics shedding his light like a long level ray of fire from the verge of the horizon, and going down beyond the world of waters which were overspread by a darkness sudden and complete, for luckily there was no moon, and the night was a very gloomy one for those latitudes.

All lights on board were extinguished, the studding-sails and sky-sails were all taken off the ship, the course of which was altered four points; the port-tacks were brought aft, the starboard yard-heads trimmed accordingly, and the *Amethyst* passed away into the darkness, leaving astern, floating in the water, a ship's lighted lantern attached to a barrel as

a decoy—a suggestion of Derval's, and greatly did the Captain compliment him thereon.

This light, which was visible from the deck, continued to bob about on the waves for some time, and no doubt the stranger would continue to steer directly for it, and very probably ran it down, as about an hour after it was set afloat, it suddenly vanished, and by that time the *Amethyst* was considered safe, all the more so that the wind came more aft for the direction she had taken, and again her yards were squared, but no light was placed in the binnacle; the second mate, Tom Tyeblock, steered her by the light of the stars, and perfect silence was maintained during the night.

When day broke not a vestige of the chase was visible, even from the masthead; the guns were made fast, and the portlids also, the arms and ammunition were all sent below, and the vessel was kept off to her course.

Ere long she reached the 40th degree of southern latitude, and then her prow was pointed to the wide and stormy ocean which divides Africa from Australia; and now gigantic albatrosses—the “man-o’-war bird,” as the sailors name them—were seen around the ship, with those graceful little birds which resemble swallows in shape and mode of flying, though smaller—Mother Carey’s chickens. “And all the world knows, or ought to know,” as a sailor told Derval, “that Mother Carey was an aunt of St. Patrick.”

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## CHAPTER VII.

## TURTLE ISLAND.

“HE didn’t like seeing the guns cast loose, and the powder and small arms brought on deck, this precious first mate of ours,” said Joe Grummet one day to Derval, when they were up aloft; “cos why? he is a coward, and cowards are always cruel. He was once a captain, but his certificate is suspended—though I don’t know for how long, but suspended it is—cos why? He caught a poor stowaway lad on board, half dead with confinement and want of food, and how do you think he treated him? He lashed a ring-bolt with spunyarn athwart his open jaws to prevent his shrieks being heard when he ropes-ended him, and trained a dog to bite him; he headed him up in a cask and rolled him round the deck; and this work went on for days. He made a timber hitch on a line, and hoisted him by the neck three feet from the deck at a time, till his eyes started from their sockets, and blood and froth oozed from his mouth, flogging him day after day,

till one came, when the poor boy was found dead under the lee of the long-boat; and then his body, without service or prayer, was chucked overboard.\* Now he sails as chief mate, but I wonder our owners took him aboard at all."

This anecdote served to increase Derval's disgust for Rudderhead, who seemed almost to divine that he was the subject of conversation, as he stood on the quarter-deck, with his eyes steadily regarding them in the foretop.

Amid fine weather, and accompanied by steady and pleasant breezes, the *Amethyst* made the Island of Desolation, or Kerguelen's Land, the abode alone of petrels, albatrosses, gulls, and sea-swallows, on the rifted rocks of which, washed by incessant rains, nothing grows but saxifrage — a lonely and most melancholy place.

After passing it, the ship's log shows that she encountered a gale, and that the watch had to take in the main topgallant-sail and mainsail, with the fourth reef of the topsails, and set the mainstay-sail. In the evening she was under close-reefed topsails, a reefed foresail, and was shipping heavy seas.

Fine weather came again, and one fine forenoon, a week or so after, when Derval had the watch, the cry "Land ahead!" from the look-out men caused every glass to be levelled at a dark-blue streak, that rose like a

\* A fact.

cloud from the shining sea, upon the lee bow ; and a reference to the chart showed that it was one of those sequestered and seldom visited isles in the South Sea, in latitude 60 south, and 110 west longitude, and is known as Turtle Island.

It was rocky, hilly, and seemed to rise fast from the sea, and to loom large, through a kind of white haze, exhaled from the latter by the heat of the sun ; thus, by the bearings given, the reader will see that it was a considerable distance south of the regular line from Britain to Australia.

As Captain Talbot was anxious to procure some turtle, he gave orders to stand towards it, and about nightfall came to anchor in seven fathoms water, in a fine sandy bay, where the waves rippled on the beach as quietly as those of an island lake, and where groves of trees grow close to the water's edge.

The volcanic rocks at the mouth of the bay were literally covered with sea-hens, gigantic albatrosses, and other feathered tribes ; wild boars and wild goats could be seen by the glass ere the sun set, but luckily no sign of inhabitants, on which Talbot rather congratulated himself, as he knew well the isle possessed them, and that, like all other South Sea savages, they were vindictive, cruel, and hostile to all strangers.

By daybreak next morning two boats' crews, under Rudderhead and Derval, taking with them handspikes or capstan bars, pulled in

shore to search for turtle. They beached the boats at a place where a number of large turtle were seen, well up on the shore, near some dense brushwood, out of which black cocks flew from time to time, and near which some great seals lay basking in the sun.

In high spirits the boats' crews sprang ashore, and intercepting the retreat of the turtle, some of which were of such a size as to be two or three hundred-weight, they proceeded with the handspikes to turn them on their backs and leave them thus till several were captured, and then tumbled into the boats.

Full of natural interest at treading on new soil, and looking on that which he had never seen before, Derval, penetrating through the brushwood, advanced some hundred yards upward and inshore, and heard with pleasure the tender rustling of the leaves in the morning sea-breeze, while inhaling the perfume of the aromatic plants and myrtle-trees. The brilliant green of the woods that crept up the sides of the hills, which in one place were so lofty that the haze shrouded their summits, were all novel and delightful, after the monotony of the sea and sky during a long voyage.

While observing the brilliant tints and peculiar shadows given by the morning sun to some volcanic rocks rising from the nearest grove of trees, he became suddenly aware that they were swarming with black savages, whose weapons, whatever they were, glittered in the sun, and who from their eyrie were evidently

watching the ship in the bay, if not the party in quest of turtle on the beach.

He had scarcely made this discovery, when he became aware that Reeve Rudderhead was by his side, with what intent he could not divine. Curiosity had no doubt prompted him to follow Derval, simply to see what was to be seen, and opportunity made him suddenly avail himself of the time to do the fell crime he subsequently committed.

Enemies though they were, who never spoke but on inevitable matters connected with ship duty, Derval could not refrain from drawing his ungracious messmate's attention to the watching savages and their hostile aspect, adding:

"Don't you think, sir, that we had better retire?"

They were already in motion and leaping down the rocks, with yells, brandishing their spears and clubs.

"Retire?" growled Rudderhead with an oath, "I think so, unless we mean to share the fate of Captain Cook; so here goes for one. As for you," he added, with one of his ferocious maledictions, "they may pick your bones, and welcome!" Then whirling the heavy hand-spike he carried, circularly in the air, he struck Derval a blow on the back of the head that felled him bleeding, stunned, and senseless, among the brushwood!

The moment he had accomplished this terrible and atrocious act, he went plunging down to the beach, shouting—

“The savages—the natives are upon us ; into the boats with you for your lives, and shove off to the ship ! ”

Alarmed by this cry, and being unarmed, the party were forced to be content with what turtle they had got—some seven or eight—and leaping into their two boats, pushed off at once from the shore, and shipping their oars pulled away with a will, just as a naked horde of dark-skinned savages, perfectly nude, save in the matter of the bead ornaments that hung about their persons, shrieking, whooping, yelling, and dancing like mad things, came rushing with war-clubs, spears, powerful bows and arrows, close to the edge of the water, and even rushing into it up to their waists.

The boats' crews could see their dark, copper-coloured skins, their hair which was longer and straighter than the wool of the negro, their gleaming eyes and white glistening teeth. An arrow or two whistled past, but wide of the mark, and with laughing shouts of defiance the party brought their boats sheering alongside the ship, when the turtles had ropes hitched round them, and were quickly conveyed on board.

“Hoist in the boats,” was now the order of Rudderhead, in his guilty haste anticipating the authority of the captain for doing so.

In the haste and confusion with which they had embarked, the crew of each boat probably thought—if they thought on the subject at all—that Derval was on board the other ; nor was it till the boats were being actually



hoisted in on each quarter, that he was missed, and Joe Grummet asked, with some asperity and much alarm:

"Where is the third mate—where is Mr. Hampton?"

Then the boats' crews looked inquiringly and blankly into each other's faces.

"Left on shore!" said Captain Talbot. "Good heaven! what a fate he must have met by this time!"

"We had not a moment to lose, sir, as you must have seen, if you had been watching us," said Rudderhead sullenly and with averted eyes; his safety was his own lookout—not mine; and I think the third mate could take jolly good care of himself."

The Captain was silent; the beach was now covered by a dingy horde of savages, yelling and brandishing their weapons in defiance at the ship, and he could not for a moment doubt that Derval Hampton must have perished at their hands.

As for Mr. Reeve Rudderhead, he had not the smallest doubt about it either, believing that the little life he had left, if any, in Derval, would speedily be beaten out of him by the knob-sticks or war-clubs of the islanders.

All on board—save Reeve Rudderhead—sorrowed for Derval, and were loud in their praises and vehement in their regret (for, as an officer, he was active, vigilant, and, if distant, yet most kind), and none, perhaps, more than Captain Talbot, who valued him highly

for his gentlemanly bearing, good appearance, skill, and conscientious interest in his duty; and in all this the Captain was joined by old Joe Grummet, who would miss the listener to many a yarn of the sea, and who sighed heavily, like a head wind through a hawse-hole, slapped his thigh, viciously chewed his quid, and clenched his hard first many times, menacingly, while swearing "strange oaths," and objurgating the eyes, limbs, and blood of some individual unnamed, but who was shrewdly supposed to be the first mate.

Closely did the Captain and his officers question the boats' crews, but nothing could be elicited from them, save the facts that the first and third mates had gone a little way inland together, and the former would seem to have come back *alone*; but yet that Derval was not specially missed till the boats were hoisted in; so Grummet and Hal Bowline felt sure there must have been some treachery at work, and that the most artful savage on Turtle Island had been Reeve Rudderhead, and the brutal indifference of the latter greatly exasperated them.

"What better could you expect of a fellow who was neither man nor boy, sojer nor sailor?" growled Rudderhead. "A lubber he was—always reading when he should have been knotting, splicing, and learning to box the compass."

Reading was not to the speaker's taste, though grog was, and he drank it at night to keep out the cold, by day to cure the heat,

never sipping it, "but shipping it in bulk, at a mouthful," so Joe Grummet said.

But now, regrets for Derval apart, active work was cut out for the crew of the *Amethyst*.

Thick as bees the dark natives seemed to be swarming around the shores of the bay; the alarm and muster of them seemed to be general, and more than a score of pretty large canoes, full of armed warriors, paddling the water into foam, howling like madmen, and all in a frantic state of activity, shot out of mangrove creeks and other places where they would seem to have been concealed, and very soon the ship was nearly environed with them.

The small arms were all distributed by this time, the guns cast loose and shotted with grape, the ports triced up, and the watch on deck were ordered to prepare for sea. The courses were let fall, the topsails half-hoisted, and the ship was sheered to her anchor, *i.e.* steered towards it while weighing, so as to keep the wind and current ahead, and thus lessen the friction on the hawse-pipe.

If the intentions of these people were hostile, which Captain Talbot and his crew never doubted, they were not immediately aggressive, but continued to paddle round and round the ship, coming as near as they dared, as they had probably been fired upon by other vessels and knew the effect of cannon and musketry

The windlass bars were all shipped, but

there was a great and altogether unexpected delay in getting the anchor a-trip or even roused. The flukes seemed to hold on to something, and for a time the bars were vainly strained in the grasp of the seamen, but "the main piece," or beam of the windlass, remained immovable on its iron spindles, and the oaths and execrations of Mr. Rudderhead, who, in his anxiety, began to think of slipping the cable, were loud and bitter. The mouth of the bay was becoming well-nigh blocked up by canoes, and the minds of all on board the *Amethyst* were full of those stories which ever and anon the public prints give, of the wholesale massacre of ships' crews by savages in the isles of the South Sea.

To intimidate them Captain Talbot ordered a 9-pounder, loaded with a blank cartridge, to be fired, but like blank firing on a mob at home, this precisely made matters worse, for even while the echoes of the gun pealed over the water, seeing no effect followed, the savages uttered screams of defiance and pulled closer, with the evident intention of boarding, and arrows began to whizz over the ship, or stick quivering into her sides and deck every instant.

At that instant the clanking of the windlass pawls was heard, a welcome sound; the anchor was roused, "up-torn, reluctant from its oozy bed," and was seen dripping a-cockbill at the cat-head. The topsails were fully hoisted and the courses sheeted home, but there was very little wind, so the ship's

progress was slow, and the arrows were flying faster than ever. Captain Talbot had his cheek laid open by one, and three of the crew were more or less wounded, one by a barbed reed, which cost Dr. Strang the greatest trouble to extract, and perceiving that the strangers were taking to flight emboldened the pursuers, who came so close that they were endeavouring to reach the side plates and chains.

“Depress the guns to port and starboard, fire wherever these devils are thickest, and blaze away the small-arm men,” cried Captain Talbot, whose face was streaming with blood.

The savages, their canoes huddled close together, jostling and crashing side by side, were now nearly all within pistol-range thus the issue of the double broadside, together with a sputtering fire from the breechloading rifles over the gunnel, had a terrific effect upon them. The simultaneous roar of the 9-pounders burst like thunder over the waters of the bay; for a brief space the vessel was shrouded in smoke, and amid it the crew could hear that the defiant war-yells had given place to those of terror, rage, and agony.

As the light smoke curled up through the rigging, or went ahead with the wind, and the guns were drawn in for reloading, a scene of terrible devastation became visible. Many of the canoes were dashed to pieces and floated in fragments on the water, clutched desperately by hands that had relinquished the bow, the spear, or the war-club. Other canoes were riddled and sinking with all on

board. Scores of black heads were bobbing about like fishermen's floats, and all around the *Amethyst* the clear blue water of the bay was streaked with blood.

The groans and gurglings of the wounded and dying who floated about were somewhat heart-sickening.

"Cease firing the guns," cried the Captain, "but pick off any scoundrel within range of the small arms."

Thus from the waist and quarter on both sides a desultory fire was maintained; most deliberate were the aims taken at any black head that appeared, for the crew had been thoroughly alarmed and exasperated. Just as the ship got clear of the bight or little bay, and the wind began to freshen, a most singular act of retribution took place.

As the guns and ports were being made fast, Reeve Rudderhead chanced—for what reason or by what impulse he knew not—to look over the side, when he perceived just beneath him a savage crouching in the main chains dripping with blood from a wound in his throat, and while hopeless of mercy, fearing to trust himself to the water while the deadly rifles were in activity over his head. Finding himself discovered, quick as thought, with deadly and unerring hand, he launched a spear at the first mate's head, and leaping into the water was seen no more.

The lance, which had a small barbed head, went right through the two cheeks of Mr. Rudderhead, who uttered a howl of rage and

anguish, as he rushed back fairly "spritsail-yarded," as the sailor's said, and with his mouth so full of blood that he was soon speechless and well-nigh choked, for a labial artery had been cut, and when Dr. Strang removed the lance, by first sawing off its head, the hæmorrhage was so great that the crew began to think—if they did not precisely hope—that the wounded man would "slip his cable."

The wounds were dressed, a good horn of grog was next given him, and he was tucked into his berth, where, doubtless, his reflections would be of a somewhat mingled character. His visage had received a double wound, which, though he had not much beauty to mar, would render him unpleasant to look upon for the remainder of his life. He had no compunction for his treacherous conduct to Derval, even in the least degree, and he was chiefly occupied in surmising whether he had killed him outright, or if the savages were—like most of the South Sea islanders—cannibals, what they might do if they found him dead or alive; and, lastly, whether Mrs. Hampton would "come down handsomely" on learning that she was—as her letter had it—rid of him; then he savagely cursed his present plight, and lay growling on his pillow, while the breeze freshened and sail was made on the ship, and ere night fell upon the sea Turtle Island was out of sight.

And now to record the retribution referred to!  
—The arrow-wounds of Captain Talbot and

others progressed most favourably under Dr. Strang's skilful treatment; but whether it was that the blood of Rudderhead was in an unhealthy state, or that the spearhead had been poisoned, it was difficult to discover, as the hurts he had received, so far from healing, grew daily worse and worse. His agony increased till it drove him to madness, he could neither eat nor drink. His face swelled up and became discoloured until he was something frightful to look upon, and times there were when his groans, prayers, and imprecations rang through the whole ship, and chilled the very souls of the men in the watches of the night.

To Dr. Strang it was soon evident that he was dying; but he had much vitality in him, and died hard, in his latter hours raving of the scuttled ship or the stowaway, of Derval Hampton, and many other persons and events. The wind was blowing a heavy and increasing gale, and the *Amethyst* was scudding under close-reefed topsails, in a perilous and chopping sea, when Rudderhead passed away, clutching the Captain's hands, as if *he* could retain him in this world, and passed from it, impenitent for the past, yet hopeless of the future; and the fiat of the doctor was that the ship could not be too soon rid of his remains.

At that crisis the brevity of even a funeral at sea was dispensed with, and he was thrown overboard to leeward, into the trough of an angry midnight sea, with four 9-pound shot



at his heels—buried precisely as he had buried the poor stowaway boy, without a prayer, finding a grave “unknelled, uncoffined, and unknown.”

As if his departure had been awaited for by the spirit of the storm, the latter lulled rapidly, and, when day broke, the cheerful cry of “Land ahead!” announced that the bold and rocky south-west cape of Tasmania was only ten miles distant, and bearing north-east, with the mountains, snow-capped at that season, in the back-ground.

Next day saw the *Amethyst* working through D’Encastreaux’s Channel, sixteen miles eastward of it, to her safe anchorage off Hobart Town, from whence the mail took home the intelligence of Derval Hampton’s fate on Turtle Island. The fight with the natives there formed a passing newspaper paragraph, and, so far as he was concerned, there was an end of it.

When Greville Hampton — that sorely-changed man, whose god had become gold—heard of his eldest son’s miserable fate, “some natural tears he shed,” as memory went back to the little golden-haired boy that was wont to nestle at Mary’s knee, in the little cottage which was as much a thing of the past as herself. Master Rookleigh Hampton heard of it with perfect philosophy, as became, he thought, a lad of his years; and Mrs. Hampton, as in duty bound, put on, for as brief a period as decency required, a most becoming suit of mourning. But there was one who,

when he read of the event while glancing over the newspaper, really sorrowed for Derval—Lord Oakhampton, who, when he looked at his happy little daughter in her budding beauty, and thought of what might have been, and how nearly he lost her, could not but regret the untimely fate of the brave young sailor to whom he owed her life and safety, and said much to her on the subject that made the gentle girl feel deeply.

Four more years passed on, and the name and existence of Derval Hampton became almost forgotten in his father's house, or was, perhaps, remembered chiefly by his nurse, old Patty Fripp.

By that time Rookleigh, strangely precocious, had become—in his sixteenth year—almost a man ere boyhood was past, and during that part of his career, he showed indeed how “the child is the father of the man.” Greedy, avaricious, like Mr. Ralph Nickleby (in *his* youth) he was wont to lend to his companions and schoolfellows halfpence to be repaid by pence, and so forth; and his disposition was further largely leavened with cruelty, which seemed born in him, and bade defiance to all remonstrance. Servants, horses, dogs, and even insects felt its virulence, and when Mr. Asperges Laud spoke reprehensively on the subject, his mother would merely urge that “he was just like other boys,” and that all boys are cruel. And already in his sixteenth year, by the influence of companions, though selfish and avaricious

to a degree, he, through the medium of billiards, cards, and a betting-book, was utterly wasting the time during which he was waiting for the rent-roll which his mother assured him must one day be his. He was tall, well-made and well-featured, for both his parents were handsome, but the expression of his face, particularly of his shifty green eyes—for they were less golden-hazel in tint than those of his mother—proved unpleasant to all who knew him, and indicated a great latent spirit of evil and malevolence.

In the succession of his tutors, in the society with which he mingled, and in all his surroundings, Rookleigh Hampton had a thousand advantages that the unfortunate Derval had never known, yet with them all he did not eventually make a particular figure amid the circle in which he moved.

Though lavish enough in his expenditure upon himself, and even on those who flattered him, ministered unto him, and made life lively and pleasant by pandering to his weaknesses, the leading features of his character were gross selfishness and avarice or acquisitiveness, all of which he seemed to have inherited from his mother, or through the force of his father's latter thoughts, and were thus, to the manner, born in him.

As when poor Derval sailed on his fatal voyage, Greville Hampton might be found daily in his luxurious library, settling mortgages, signing contracts, adjusting ground-

rents, buying up land and old manor-houses to remodel or remove for new ones—up to the eyes among deeds and papers, with old Mr. Stephen De Murrer, the family solicitor, a denizen of Gray's Inn, who about this time began to exert himself anew in the peerage claim of his lucrative employer, and eventually visited Lord Oakhampton, at his house in Tyburnia, on the subject.

Proud and haughty by nature, though a scrupulously well-bred and most aristocratic-like man, his lordship could be very cold and repellent to those he disliked; thus his reception of the stout and deliberate old lawyer, when the latter was ushered into the stately drawing-room overlooking the park, was neither soothing nor encouraging.

“You are a bold fellow, Mr.—oh—Mr.—”

“De Murrer,” said the lawyer, bowing.

“Yes—a bold fellow, sir, to come to me personally on this subject, of which I admit having heard before—a claim to my hereditary peerage by this whilom spendthrift—obscure beggar, and latterly successful speculative builder! Absurd, sir! The matter has no face upon it—won't hold water,” continued Lord Oakhampton, scornfully; “and anyway, I beg to refer you to my solicitors at Gray's Inn.”

“If, my Lord—if the assumption that your great ancestor was summoned by mistake to the House of Peers, in the reign of Queen Anne, is proved—and it is also proved that the real heir was then in existence—the heir

from whom my client is descended—what then, my Lord?”

Mortification, exasperation, and pride made the haughty heart of Lord Oakhampton thrill painfully, and he listened to this, and much more that the little lawyer had to advance, as one in a dream. The flies buzzed about the flowers in a magnificent jadinierie; a French clock ticked monotonously on the mantelpiece, and the busy life of London outside, went on as a ceaseless stream; but he felt as if all this evil were about to happen not to himself, but to someone else, in the confusion and irritation of his mind.

“We shall suppose this peculiar claim made good and clear in law, Mr.—Mr.—”

“De Murrer,” suggested the lawyer, blandly.

“What would be the result?”

“Can you ask me?” said Mr. De Murrer; “most calamitous to your Lordship, I assure you.”

“In what way, sir?”

“What way?”

“Don’t repeat my words, sir!”

“With the title would go lands and estate, plate, pictures—everything, even to your household effects!”

Lord Oakhampton grew pale—very pale, yet less at the thought of himself than of his daughter, for the world was all before her yet. Rallying a little, he said:—

“You cannot think, Mr. De Murrer, that

I will yield without a struggle—and a desperate one too!”

“Unquestionably not, my Lord; only——”

“Only what?” he asked, impatiently

“With the solid and simple proofs we——”

“Proofs that must be submitted to the legal acumen and most searching analysis of my law advisers!”

“Indubitably, my Lord; yet the dates are, fortunately for us, not remote ones.”

“Indeed!”

“Your Lordship’s great-grandfather Derval, to whom a great mass of the estate came by marriage with the Mohuns, was called to the Upper House in the year of the Union with Scotland, 1707, and sat in the first British House of Lords, as the direct heir of Derval, Lord Oakhampton, who was forfeited under Edward IV., but was restored by Henry VII. for his service against the King of Scotland; yet your great-grandsire was so summoned in ignorance that his eldest brother, who had quarrelled with his family, was *not* dead, but was married, and settled in Bermuda, where he became ancestor, in the third degree, of Greville Hampton, now of Finglecombe.”

“Intolerable dry-as-dust stuff this!” exclaimed Lord Oakhampton, his pride and passion rising again. “Do you imagine that I am an entire committee of privileges, to listen to all this twaddle, and that the title that has come to me, through a long line of stainless ancestors, is to be disturbed by the

outrageous pretensions of an obscure colonist's grandson. Moreover, sir, do you think that I am also unaware how men of your trade make it their business to rake up such claims if they can, and assume to guide the destinies of the rich and noble, as the means of bringing money to their own coffers?"

To this somewhat injurious speech, the little lawyer only shrugged his shoulders, and smiled deprecatingly, as he replied:

"I can easily understand, and well pardon, your Lordship's natural irritation at the prospect all this action-at-law involves; the loss of rank and position—wealth and political influence; your daughter, at her very entry into life and society, reduced, like yourself, to the condition of a commoner; the newspaper comments—the nine days' wonder of London; the sneers of the once servile, and the mockery of the malevolent, and of all who take a cruel delight in strange reverses of fortune, but I would beg of you to think over the matter to be contended; for the mere announcement that not only was your title about to be contested, but your property litigated, would bring any creditors you have, like a swarm of hornets on you."

Mr. De Murrer now took his hat and departed, certain that this Parthian shot was the heaviest and sharpest he had fired; and sooth to say, my Lord Oakhampton felt and knew it to be so!

His alarm, however, and infinite anxiety, rather died away when delays ensued con-

sequent to the disappearance or alleged death of Derval, and still more by the sudden demise of Greville Hampton, who was found lifeless at his desk one afternoon, when at his usual task of calculating and speculating.

The bulk of all his fortune he left by will to Rookleigh, while Mrs. Hampton was handsomely provided for during her life. The sum of £500 per annum was set apart for Derval, in case he was ever heard of; if not within a given time, it reverted to Rookleigh.

So Greville Hampton was dead, and Rookleigh stood at the head of his grave as chief mourner; but he was not laid by Mary's side in the pretty little churchyard where for ages, yea since Saxon times, "the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep." No, no; Mrs. Hampton took care of that, so he was deposited in the new and pretentious mausoleum of Cornish granite, in the fashionable cemetery of "the new and rising watering-place of Finglecombe," where a special spot was reserved for herself.

In the matter of the peerage claim, Mrs. Hampton would have left nothing undone, of course, to urge Mr. De Murrer in advancing the interests of her well-beloved son Rookleigh; but just about the time of her husband's death, something occurred which led to a change in her mind, or to indifference on the subject, and this "something" proved to be tidings of—Derval!



## CHAPTER VIII.

H.M.S. "HOLYROOD."

AFTER being struck down by Reeve Rudderhead, in the merciless way we have described, Derval lay long insensible, and when his thoughts began to turn again to earth, he was haunted by a dream of home—of wild grass where the brindled cattle stood knee-deep, of fields studded with the white stars of the dog-daisies, the golden buttercups, and scarlet poppies, of rose-tangled hedges and meadow-sweet; then came the face and figure of Rudderhead—and starting, he staggered up on his hands and knees, weak and giddy with loss of blood, dim of sight, and his head racked with pain by the force of the blow.

What sounds were these? Cannon and musketry and yells in the air, as if the fiends of the lower world had broken loose. He remembered the savages from which the boats' crews were escaping, and with a heart filled by terrible emotions of anxiety and rage—anxiety for himself, and rage to find that he was the victim of a plot between Reeve

Rudderhead and Mrs. Hampton—he crept cautiously through the brushwood among which he had been lying, and where a pool of his blood yet lay, till he reached the brow of a little eminence which overlooked the bay, and arrived in time only to see the last of the conflict between the *Amethyst* and the savages.

The bay was strewed with the floating ruins of many canoes, and the dead bodies of their whilom occupants ; others were being paddled away in hot haste ; the ship was under weigh, with her topsails sheeted home and her headsails filled ;—under weigh, and he—unable to join her, or make any sign or signal—was left behind !

With all that conviction implied, a great stupor—the stupor of utter horror—fell upon him, and he could have wept tears of rage and despair.

Defenceless, helpless, powerless, almost petrified by the whole situation, he gazed after the ship, on which sail after sail was spread to catch the land breeze, as she already began to lessen in distance upon the blue and shining sea ; then sight seemed to pass from him—a blindness to descend upon his eyes ; he became faint, and, falling on the earth, with the last effort of sense, crept under some of the gigantic ferns, with which the island abounds, and for a time remembered no more.

When sense again came, and he looked about him, the shadows were falling east-

ward; the ship had become diminished to a speck upon the ocean, then reddened by the setting sun. He gazed after her as if his soul followed her, and when he could see even the spectrum of her no longer, a groan escaped him, and he burst into tears.

On one hand spread the boundless sea; on the other, a succession of knolls and hills and bluffs, with pine-covered summits, and little grassy vales between them, all glowing under the gleaming west.

What was to be his fate?

He dared not speculate upon it, though whatever was in store for him must be close indeed now!

Dipping his handkerchief in a runnel he bathed the back of his head, thus removing the clotted and extravasated blood, and then bandaged up the wound with his necktie. A deep draught taken in the hollow of his hands from the same pool revived him, and a few wild peaches, figs, and grapes afforded him food; after which hermit-like repast he seated himself against a rock and strove to think—to think, of what? While the lower portion of the western sky assumed a vermilion hue, and the upper was violet braced with gold; sunk in shadow now, the waves rose with a silvery sheen upon the yellow sand, their ripple alone breaking the stillness of the place and time; but the moment the sun, with its tropical rapidity, sank beyond the sea, all these varied and wonderful tints passed away at once.

Derval remembered the picturesque elements of the scene afterwards; at the time, he was certainly not in the mood to appreciate them.

The parrots, pigeons, and straw-necked ibises had all gone to their nests; some kangaroo-rats (about the size of rabbits) and squirrels were flitting about, Derval's first fear was of snakes, but he saw none.

The multitude of savages that in the morning had been swarming on the shore, had all disappeared, and gone inland to their kraals and villages; but how long would he be able to elude them; and as for their habits and nature, he could not doubt that they were in any way less terrible and revolting than those of other South Sea islanders, most of whom are cannibals.

As he thought of the home he had quitted years ago, of his father's changed nature and indifference, his brother's selfishness, his step-mother's unrelenting malevolence, and Reeve Rudderhead's cruel treachery, all culminating in the present catastrophe, leaving him to perish helpless and unavenged, excitement made his wound burst out afresh, and he staunch it again with difficulty.

The southern constellations came out in all their wonderful brilliance, and under their silvery light, he sat lost in thoughts that wrung his heart. How long—even if he found food and concealment—might it be ere a ship passed that way; and if one did, how was he to attract the attention of those on

board—how signal to them unseen by the savage inhabitants of the isle?

The memory of much that he had read, of men wrecked or marooned in lonely and desolate places, together with the fancies of a quick and fertile imagination, added greatly to the poignancy of his mental sufferings. For in its desperation his situation was a maddening one, and calculated to blind him with horror and despair.

Was he to perish of starvation and exposure in the groves of the island, or to find a death of torture at the hands of its inhabitants, without obtaining even a grave? for there was a detail in the future after death, that made his blood run cold to think of.

And was this unthought-of fate to be the end of all his once bright day-dreams, his hopes and aspirations! And were all his bright ambitions and little vanities—the vanities and ambitions of ardent youth—to end in less and worse than utter nothingness?

He feared to move about even in search of food, lest the track of his footsteps might be found, for he knew that the aborigines of such places can follow as blood-hounds do—but by sight, not scent, and in a manner that seems incredible to the European—any track they find, and follow it, too, over grass and rock, even up a tree; thus he knew that were his traces found, he would inevitably be tracked and discovered, wherever he went.

So the long hours of the night went slowly past, and he longed, as a change or relief, for morning. "Poor fools that we are!" says a writer; "our hours are in time so few, and yet we forever wish them shorter, and fling them, scarcely used, behind us roughly, as a child flings his broken toys."

At last exhaustion of the mind and body brought blessed sleep, and on the dewy earth, under the shelter of some black and silver mimosa trees, he slumbered heavily till the noon of the next day was well advanced, and the sun shone in the unclouded sky.

He had a dream of the now defunct cottage at Finglecombe, as it existed when he was wont to play by his mother's knee, or watch with childish wonder his silent father, a moody and discontented man. He started and awoke, recalling an old Devonshire superstition, that to have a dream of one's childhood, when in maturity, was a sure sign that something was about to happen.

"Oh, what may that something be!" was his first despairing, rather than hopeful, mental thought, and with it came a terror of what the long and solitary hunger-stricken day might bring forth.

But he was not left long in doubt. There came distinctly to his ear the familiar sound of an anchor being let go, and the rush of a chain-cable through a hawse-hole, followed by the blowing-off of steam!

A sudden revulsion of thought from despair to keenest joy—a gush of prayer and grati-

tude to God filled his heart, and a shout escaped his lips—help, succour, escape, were all at hand, and already—already!

Forgetful, oblivious of what savages might be near or might see him, he started to an eminence close by, and saw in the bay, the very place occupied but yesterday morning—a time that seemed ages upon ages ago—by the *Amethyst*, a stately steam corvette, riding at anchor, and all her snow-white canvas being handed with man-o'-war celerity.

She had no ensign flying, but to Derval's experienced eye, it was evident that she was a British ship. If any of the natives saw her, as there was every reason to suppose they did, the terrible lesson taught them by the guns and small-arms of the *Amethyst*, made them conceal themselves, for nothing was seen of them when Derval rushed to the beach, and, without attempting to make a signal or waiting for a boat, and heedless or unthinking of whether there might be sharks in the water, plunged into the waves that rippled on the rocks, and swam off at once, through the debris of battered canoes and dead bodies that were still floating about.

"Man overboard—a rope—a rope—stand by!" he heard voices shouting as he cleft the water and neared her fast, for he was a powerful and skilful swimmer, and after a few minutes he found himself, panting, breathless, and faint with excitement, past anxiety and present joy, safe upon the deck of the ship-of-war, where he was of course,

supposed by all to be a ship-wrecked man—the last survivor of some unfortunate crew—and found himself overwhelmed with questions.

But none of these could he answer with coherence, until he was taken into the cabin of the captain, who at once ordered him wine and other refreshments. He then told his story, which elicited considerable commiseration, and much more indignation at the foul treachery of which his messmate had been guilty.

He now found that he was on board H.M. corvette *Holyrood*, of 16 guns, an iron ship, cased with wood, of 5,000 horse-power, commanded by Captain — who came into these seas with orders to look after any survivors of wrecks, and who had been last at the Crozet Islands, that wild and mountainous group which lies in south latitude 47 and east longitude 46, and the peaks of which, high as Ben Nevis, are covered with eternal snow. He had visited Turtle Island for the same purpose, and meant now to haul up for England, *via* the Cape, St. Helena, and Ascension.

But for the circumstance of this ship's fortuitous visit, it is not difficult to speculate upon what must eventually have been the awful fate of Derval Hampton!

The latter now found himself recognised by the third lieutenant of the *Holyrood*, who had belonged to the *President* training ship, and astonished the rescued man by accosting



him by name, and they shook hands quite as old friends.

Finding that Derval was a gentleman by education and bearing, and an officer of the Royal Naval Reserve, whose name as such was in the *Navy List*, the officers of the gun-room at once requested that he would mess with them during the passage home, or till he made some other arrangement.

What other arrangement could he make, but rejoin his ship? and that, as yet, was impossible.

The homeward voyage was a very protracted one, and for several reasons the *Holyrood* was long detained at the Cape by the Commodore commanding our squadron there.

It was when lying in Table Bay that Derval read in an old number of the *Times*, that Lord Oakhampton, his meeting with whom he had well-nigh forgotten amid more exciting events, had returned home from Bermuda. Then he thought of Clara, and wondered if the little maid, with the rosebud mouth she had given him so frankly to kiss, remembered the young sailor to whom she owed her life in the Summer Isles.

The paragraph announcing that Lord Oakhampton had resigned his governorship, concluded by stating that strange rumours were abroad, to the effect that his Lordship's return was connected with a new and unexpected claimant to his title and estates, whose pretensions thereto would soon be a knotty matter for a committee of privileges.

Derval read all this with singular indifference. So keen was his disgust of his own family, that he cared little whether his father succeeded in his claim or not. One fact he felt assured of, that it would avail him—Derval—nothing to communicate to him the cruel treachery of which his step-mother, and her kinsman, had made his eldest son their victim. She would simply deny it, and the breach made wide enough now by coldness and indifference, would become more so by solid mistrust and dislike.

Thus he resolved to go no more near his home, and hence the long ignorance of all there as to his movements, and even of his existence.

When the *Amethyst* returned home, and Derval stepped on board of her in the London docks, old Joe Grummet, who was smoking his pipe in the gangway, thought he saw a ghost, and uttered a roar of absolute terror! Most extravagant was the joy of the worthy old salt on being assured of Derval's identity.

"Of all my yarns, this beats them—beats old Boots!" he exclaimed, as he drew a match across the sole of his shoe and re-lighted his pipe.

"Where is the Captain, Joe?" asked Derval.

"Captain's in the cabin."

The unexpected visitor descended at once.

"Just come on board, sir!" said he, reporting himself with comic coolness and gravity.

“Good heavens—can it be—Derval—Derval Hampton!” exclaimed Captain Talbot, springing up from his writing-desk, and scattering his letters over the deck, and he took both Derval’s hands in his own, shook them heartily, and mutual explanations at once ensued.

After rejoining the *Amethyst*, Derval made many voyages with her, and thus four years and more passed on, till, seeing an account of his father’s death in a paper some weeks old, a great revulsion of feeling came over him, with much of repentance for the mutual indifference in which he had indulged, and a species of craving came over him to see the home of his childhood, or rather the place thereof, once again, for his father lay there in the great granite mausoleum, and his mother near the yew of other years, in the old churchyard—the true “God’s acre” of Finglecombe; and he longed, too, to see old Patty Fripp.

As for his father, his old face came back to memory, as he remembered it in the days of his infancy, out of the long dim vista of the vanished years, and so for a time his whole heart went forth to his father—the father that loved his mother, and her memory so, before that other came!

Derval was now first mate of the *Amethyst*, Tom Tyeblock having got a ship of his own. He was moreover a sub-lieutenant of the Royal Naval Reserve, had done his gunnery drill again and again on board the training-

ship, drawing the pay of his rank, and messing in the gun-room.

Of course he still connected all that had befallen him on Turtle Island, with Mrs. Hampton and her letter to the late Mr. Reeve Rudderhead; thus, after taking the train to Finglecombe, on reaching that place no power could make him take up his abode underneath the roof of his half-brother and Mrs. Hampton. So he took rooms at the hotel, the "Hampton Arms" (the armorial three choughs), where Rookleigh visited him promptly enough; but the meeting between those two who shared the same blood, was a strange and unnatural one, after their long separation, though Derval's heart warmed to Rookleigh, and was more stirred than vanity would have permitted him to own.

"What will people think," said Rookleigh, "of your being here at an hotel, and not at home?"

"Home!" exclaimed Derval, with a bitter laugh.

"Yes—it is home."

"Yours—not mine; and as to 'the people,' they may think precisely what they please, my dear Rookleigh."

"And what shall I tell mother is your reason?" asked Rookleigh, who, to do him justice, was ignorant of much that Derval knew.

"Say it is my desire that she should forget her dear and amiable cousin, Reeve Rudderhead, and all connected with him, especially

*their epistolary correspondence,"* was the — to Rookleigh — enigmatical, yet bitter reply of Derval.

Save the surrounding hills and woods, he found all the once secluded localities of his childhood so changed by the erection of marine villas, terraces, and formal promenades, that he would soon—in disgust—have gone back to London, but for certain influences that came to bear upon his actions.

Derval fell in love!

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## CHAPTER IX.

“THE DESIRE OF THE MOTH FOR THE STAR.”

“I HAVE never been so far out from the Marine Parade before—so far out at sea, I mean.”

“But you are not uneasy—alarmed?” asked the young man, with great tenderness of manner.

“Oh, no; am I not with *you*?” answered the girl sweetly and simply, as she drew off a glove and let the water slip through her slender white fingers, as the boat, urged by the powerful hands and arms of a handsome and sunburnt young fellow of twenty-two or thereabout, clad in a white flannel boating costume, with canvas shoes and a straw hat, shot through the water of the bay in view of Finglecombe.

It was a summer evening. The sun was setting beyond the Bristol Channel, and seeming to light its waves with fire. The rocks, the gardens and orchards along the shore, and all the villas of “the rising watering-place” were bathed in ruddy light, blended with a misty golden haze; and the warm

glow fell on two bright faces in particular. When the oarsman looked with wonder at the changes on the shore, as he sometimes did, the girl looked at him, not in a way she was wont to do, but with a soft expression in her tender eyes that he would have given the world to have seen.

Anon, when at some distance from the shore, he rested on his sculls, leaving them in the rowlocks, while the boat floated idly on the sunlit water.

"Please do not do any more of *that*," said the young lady.

"Of what?" asked her companion.

"This tatooing," said she, pointing with her parasol to his handsome bare arms, on which he had punctured, in sailor fashion, a ship in full sail, three choughs, and other insignia known to himself alone.

"Ah! Joe Grummet did all these one evening, when we were standing off and on under easy sail near Cuba," said Derval, for the speaker was he, and the beautiful girl who sat opposite to him in the stern-sheets, and on the dainty cushions of the pleasure-boat, was Clara, Lord Oakhampton's only daughter.

And now to explain how all this came about, and that these two were so intimate.

Derval was not long in discovering, from the visitors' lists, that Lord Oakhampton had taken, for the summer months, a villa in Bayview Terrace, Finglecombe, but had ignored the existence of the widow of his late namesake.

This was nothing to Derval, who immediately called at the villa and sent up his card, and was warmly received by Lord Oakhampton, who, we have said, was a tall and handsome man, with stately manners. He was elderly now, with silvery hair, but his fine aquiline features were unchanged in noble outline and honesty of expression. After a few mutual remarks and inquiries,

"I called," said Derval, "to do myself the honour of personally thanking your Lordship for the medal for which you so kindly recommended me."

"A medal most deservedly won by you, and my life-long gratitude went with it to you!" replied Lord Oakhampton, as did his daughter, who soon made her appearance, and saw that their visitor was a handsome and manly-looking young fellow. His brown hair was deeper in colour than it had been in Bermuda, and a slight moustache shaded a sensitive mouth. His tall and slender figure had all the strength and grace of manhood in it, and his manners were unexceptionable. His early training had made him grave in manner, thoughtful in expression of eye, courteous to men and deferential to women; in fact, he was all his mother could have wished him to be.

"Clara, my dear," said Lord Oakhampton bowing, with much of the old-fashioned courtesy which certainly did distinguish his manner when addressing her, or, indeed, any female of his household, "may I introduce



an old friend to you—one to whom, indeed, you owe much ! ”

Clara Hampton looked up with something of surprise, and saw only a young man like a naval officer—but a very handsome one certainly—who answered her inquiring gaze by a bow and a smile.

“How unfortunate I am to have been forgotten by you, Miss Hampton,” he said.

“Forgotten—oh, no, no,” she exclaimed as sudden recognition flashed upon her, and lightened all her features ; I remember you perfectly, and the sharks’ pool and the coral cavern in Bermuda—you are our namesake, Mr. Derval Hampton ! ”

And she frankly put both her hands in his.

“You are grown quite a woman, Miss Hampton.”

“She will be eighteen on her next birthday,” said her father ; “but women are by nature older than men,” he added laughingly.

And so it all came about thus.

Every detail of a beauty that seemed to have no peer, in his eyes at least, did Derval take in by one swift glance. In all the bloom of her age, the girl was radiantly bright and fresh. Her rich brown hair was darker now, and more luxuriant than ever ; but the violet eyes were softer and more shy than in the girlish time, when she accorded to Derval that kiss over which he fondly pondered now. But perhaps she was remembering it too. On her delicate cheeks there was a soft flush, as of the rose-leaf ; her mouth was perfect in

shape, and sweet. Refined, proud, and lovely, and she looked—birth stamped on every feature—a peer's daughter every inch, and in every way a picture fair to look upon; and so thought Derval. Never before had he dreamed that a woman could be so fair.

He was invited to stay to dinner; the invitation was repeated for a second occasion and a third. Lord Oakhampton had evidently few friends in that part of the world, was the modest thought of Derval, and the Bermuda Isles formed a safe and easy topic for general conversation when other subjects failed; and the usually haughty peer thawed fast and easily towards his young friend—little dreaming that the latter was learning faster to love his daughter, and not the less that he deemed this love a midsummer madness, and too surely might be only like the desire of the moth for the star!

They met on the marine parade, on the shingly beach, and singularly enough in some of the shady green lanes, that had escaped recent improvements; but Miss Sampler was always with her, a companion now. Derval felt his heart leap when he saw her, and it trembled as she drew near him, and as it had never trembled under human influence before. He showed her the locket she had given him at Bermuda. She laughed at first, and then coloured deeply to find that he wore it attached to his neck by a ribbon.

Yet after this she neither avoided him, nor made any change in her demeanour towards

him. What could he deduce from that, but that she favoured him, or received him as a means of passing the time in a stupid watering-place. It was bitter for him to think that she—secure in a position so far above him in many respects—might be doing thus; but from the soft, shy gentleness of her manner, it was impossible to adopt such a conviction.

Twice, when escorting her to the dinner-table, he thought that her hand—how little it was!—leant rather fondly on his arm, and the idea made his heart thrill. Is it a marvel that his head was turned and intoxicated by the opportunities offered by propinquity, and that the secret of his heart was daily trembling on his lips?

Was she luring him on to his own destruction? Her calm, gentle eye, and perfect quietude of manner, repelled this idea. Could he but have looked into the girl's heart! At that very time she was asking herself, what was this young sailor to her? Why should she feel so deeply interested in him, for such was indeed the case! Cold reason replied that he ought to be as nothing to her; yet her heart already told her that he was something, and more than something to dream of—to ponder on fondly—to be sorely missed when he departed—as if his life were already mysteriously linked with her own.

“His life linked with hers? What folly!” she whispered to herself, as she thought of her proud father and “society”

So now they had taken them to boating on

the bay; but Miss Sampler who usually played propriety in their apparently casual walks, disliked aquatic excursions, and generally sat reading on the beach, while Derval pulled far enough out to be beyond the ken of anything but a powerful lorgnette, and of this Clara generally possessed herself "to see the coast."

On the evening mentioned, when Clara referred to the tatooing, and made Derval promise to disfigure his arms no more in that remarkable way, it may be inferred that their intimacy had made considerable progress—the result of the somewhat untrammelled life they led at Finglecombe—and seldom does the evening sun fall upon a pair of more attractive-looking lovers—for lovers they were undoubtedly—though no distinct word of love had passed between them.

It lingered, softly as Derval's own eyes, on Clara's graceful figure, her creamy dress and soft laces, on her shining hair, and pretty little feet encased in hose of bright cardinal silk and tiny *bottines*, the most perfect that Paris could produce—*bottines* which the folds of her dress had kindly revealed for a time.

Seeing that Derval was resting, as we left him—resting dreamily on his sculls, and letting the boat drift with the current, while his soul was full of her beauty, and his heart seemed at his lips, she said:

"Of what are you thinking?"

"Of you," he replied, and he saw that she grew pale at the idea of what might follow,

and the conviction that she had drawn it on herself; "I was thinking that you could be a friend good and true, if you chose; and heaven knows," he added with a sigh, and timidly fencing as he thought, "I want one."

"Have you not Rookleigh, your brother of whom I have heard, but, oddly, never seen?"

"To me he is a brother, and no brother!"

"I will be your friend," said she, coyly.

"Ever!"

"Ever and always. Think of all I owe you—that I am here to-day, alive and in the world, listening to you, and spared to Papa."

Bright ardour filled his eyes, and stooping he pressed her hand to his lips; but she snatched it away.

"I do not mean friendship of *that* kind!" said she, blushing with anger at herself for taking, as she thought, the initiative; then he too reddened, and a pause ensued.

Clara had not the least idea of flirting; and yet the most consummate coquette could not have been more fascinating in her charming frankness of manner.

"Of what are you thinking now?" he asked, as her white fingers played with the shining ripples.

"Of Bermuda," she replied, with a soft smile in her averted face.

"You were a child then—five years ago—and now——"

"What am I now?" she asked, laughingly.

"Look into the water where your face is reflected, and you will see."

“ See—what ? ”

“ A face, like no other in this world—to me, especially.”

“ Now you talk foolishly ”

“ God knows, I do—perhaps,” said he, sadly ; “ it is pleasant to dream for the present, and to forget the coming future, for all this sweet companionship must end, and when I return to England again, you will be no longer Clara Hampton.”

“ What then—or who then ? ” she asked in a low voice.

“ The wife of some happy man.”

“ Why are you so sure ? ”

“ Of what ? ”

“ That he will be happy.”

“ Could he be otherwise with you ? ”

All this was pointed enough ; but both were fencing—he dreading a repulse, and she thinking of her father’s pride. Yet both were very pale, and their hearts beat violently.

“ And how came you to be so assured of all this ? ” she asked, looking down.

“ You are beautiful, rich, noble, Clara ! ”

“ You must not call me Clara. Rich ? You think, then, that no one would love me for myself alone ? ” she asked a little bitterly.

“ I have not said so.”

“ Did you think so ? ”

“ Heaven forbid ! but judging from my own heart, I wish, indeed—indeed——”

“ What ? ”

“ That you were as humble and as poor as the beggar-maid whom King Cophetua loved.”

“Thank you, a very odd wish!” she said, with a low musical laugh.

“Oh, do not mock me!” he exclaimed bitterly—for no lover likes his heroics to be made a jest of; but no mockery was in the girl’s heart; she felt as if dreaming; she only felt and knew that her lover was beside her, looking more manly and handsome, and more fascinating, than the first day they met; but she thought of her father and his lofty pride, and said with apparent firmness, yet with a gasp in her slender white throat,—

“I do not mock you—oh, never, never think that of me; but for pity’s sake, talk no more in this strain; and do pull the boat in shore, for I see Miss Sampler is making signals of impatience.”

Though her long lashes imparted a dreamy depth to the young girl’s eyes, there were in the low, broad brow, firm lips, and clearly-cut nostrils, evidence of force of character and strength of resolution.

Derval understood the situation; he sighed, shipped his sculls, and pulled in silently, feeling that he had said enough to show that he loved her, and that she chid him not, he resigned her to her chaperone, and betook him, full of anxious thoughts, to the solitude of his room at the hotel; yet each felt that they must meet again, or that henceforward life would be a blank to them; and eye said this to eye as they parted on the shore.

It was rather a source of exasperation to Mrs. Hampton in her stately villa, that Derval

should be so intimate with Lord Oakhampton and his daughter, while she and her son were not—were ignored, in fact; and this, with Derval's protracted residence at the hotel, caused no speculation among her friends and the gossips of the new settlement or watering-place; and, incited to mischief by his mother, Rookleigh Hampton began to scheme revenge; nor were Patty Fripp's ample and exulting expatiations on the rare beauty of Miss Hampton, and the great glory of Derval's boating expeditions with her, wanting as a spur on this occasion.

Lord Oakhampton remarked to himself that neither by word, act, nor hint, did Derval ever refer to his late father's dreaded claim to the coronet. This pleased him with his young friend, yet it was not without annoyance and alarm that he discovered and viewed the growing intimacy between him and his daughter, and painfully, indeed, did the latter blush when he began to remonstrate with her upon the subject; and her pain was all the deeper by a knowledge that she had brought it upon herself.

Seated together with her father in an oriel window overlooking the bay, her mind, as evening darkened and the moonlight came upon the water, was full of what had passed between herself and Derval but a very short time before, and after a silence of some minutes she said, with the irrepressible desire to talk of what was nearest her heart and uppermost in her thoughts,—



"Have you ever remarked, Papa, what a handsome young man Mr. Hampton is?"

Lord Oakhampton started quickly, and looked at her, but Clara's face was hidden in shadow.

"Of course I have observed it," he replied, "he is not only handsome, but distinguished-looking, for a man of his class. He comes of a good family."

"Yes—is he not some relation of our own, Papa?"

"Has he ever said so—does he talk of such a matter?" asked Lord Oakhampton, in a changed tone.

"Oh, no, Papa, but he strikes me as so unlike the men I usually meet."

Lord Oakhampton was silent for a minute; then he said, with some asperity of manner,—

"Since when has this extreme intimacy with Mr. Hampton been in progress?"

"Extreme intimacy, Papa!" said Clara, in a tone of dismay, and colouring deeply in the twilight.

"Yes; you understand me, I presume?"

"I have known him since the day he sent up his card, and renewed the intimacy that began at Bermuda."

"That was but a casual, but very important episode; but what passed then, under the circumstances, temporarily, when you were but a child, cannot be continued or tolerated now. He is but a merchant seaman!"

"A mate, Papa, and a commissioned officer in the Naval Reserve."

“Pshaw!”

“And heir to a large estate.”

“That is doubtful, Clara; his brother is the heir. I know there is much common sense in that little head of yours, and I wish you to bring it to bear upon the present question. This intimacy is unseemly. Good heaven! what would society say of it?”

“Society! how I do hate that word, Papa!”

“Indeed! You are young and inexperienced, and it is for me to consider that which may become insolence on his part, and folly on yours.”

Never before had her father spoken with such severity of tone, and the soft eyes of Clara filled with unseen tears.

“Ours is a levelling age certainly; but this intimacy carries the game rather far. It is outrageous!” he continued, nursing his annoyance, and warming with it.

“But he bears our name, and why may we not know him? If he is a kinsman——”

“Kinsman!” exclaimed her father, with growing anger, as he recalled the visit of Mr. De Murrer; “the devil! don’t speak thus; and as for the mere matter of a name, one would think you were an old Scotsman of a hundred years ago, rather than an English girl of the nineteenth century!”

“I only think of what I owe him, Papa,” urged Clara, greatly apprehensive that Derval’s name would now be struck off the visitors’

list—but prudence forbade such an order as yet.

“It is possible you may think too much,” continued Lord Oakhampton, greatly ruffled; “but remember, Clara, that this young man is as much out of your world as one of yonder boatmen in the bay!”

“Do not suppose, dear Papa, that I will ever do aught unbecoming your daughter. I have always done my best to please you,” she added, as her graceful figure bent over him, and a white arm stole round his neck, while her sweet face grew almost softer in expression, as she caressed him.

But she now discovered the truth of the German proverb, “Speech is silver, silence is gold,” and knew to her infinite mortification, that by her first remark on Derval’s appearance, and her attempted defence of their friendship, she had thoroughly awakened the suspicions of her father, of whose old hostility to the Hamptons of Finglecombe she knew nothing; and the results were that her liberty was much more circumscribed than it had been. There was no more boating on the bay, and Miss Sampler was for ever on duty now. Forbidden to think of him, she cherished the idea all the more. To her, Derval, honest, manly, straightforward, and single-hearted, seemed worth all “the white-handed glittering youth” she had yet met with; and thus it was in vain that her father urged that he did not and never would belong to her class in society—even by thought, culture, and

education ; but, in some of the latter premises, his lordship was in error. Yet, too keenly aware of what the claims were that Derval, or interfering friends for him, might urge to the title he held, he could neither forbid him his house nor request that he would cease to address Miss Hampton

To Derval the idea of these claims never occurred ; he felt that there was a change now, that he saw Clara more seldom, and never alone. Whether this was her own desire, or that of her father, he could not tell ; he only knew that the first stirrings of a deeply-absorbing love were quickening his pulses and thrilling in his veins. He had heard of the desire of the moth for the star, and felt himself somewhat akin to that foolish insect indeed. She was the daughter of a peer, and in the fulness of that thought, and the greatness of his passion, he forgot that he might yet be a peer himself !

Time was passing on—day followed day, and he missed the sweet companionship sorely. Her face was ever before him in all its soft beauty and variety of expression ; her voice seemed ever in his ear, as he conned over her utterances, and recalled her attractive and pretty little modes of manner. He was never weary of watching the roof that covered her, the windows she might be looking from, or the walks where he might chance to meet, even to see her ; and he resolved, that come what might, he would not go away without declaring how he loved her, without telling

her the old, old story, that was first told in Eden ; and that he would never forget her, and never love another.

The time for his departure was drawing near now, and thus he was a prey to the most terrible anxiety.

He felt that the relief of words he must have, or his heart would sink. So much had this strong passion become a part of himself, that he felt and thought that he would rather be dead and buried with her, than that she should become the wife of another. And yet such separations come to pass every day, and no one dies of them, so far as the world knows.

He had gathered courage from what he could read in her eyes, more than once, when he had met her and her chaperone, and they had lingered together, talking the merest commonplaces, but with their hearts very full indeed, and Miss Sampler keenly observant of their words and actions. Thus he had resolved that there should be no mistake when the opportunity came, and come it did one day, most unexpectedly, when he met her suddenly, alone too, and then, all the world seemed to stand still !

It was in one of the last places where he would have thought to meet her unattended—at the Nutcracking Rock, an ancient logan-stone, which rests, as it were, upon a keel, so that a push rolls it from side to side, at each vibration being arrested by a stone, against which it knocks. Hence its name, and it stands in

a wooded and solitary place, near the shore of the bay, covered with golden moss and surrounded by dwarf oak-trees and hawthorns.

She was seated on a camp-stool, and so intent on her work of sketching it, that he drew near her unperceived, with his heart beating almost painfully, and every fibre tingling with love and joy. His step aroused her, she looked round; a faint exclamation escaped her, and she dropped her pencil.

“Mr. Hampton, you here?”

“Thank heaven that I find you as I do, alone, Clara,” said he, picking up the fallen pencil, and kneeling on one knee by her side after he did so. They were eye to eye now, and both were greatly agitated.

“Alone, Clara,” said he, taking her unresisting hand, “how are you here alone?”

“Miss Sampler has just left me; did not you meet her?”

“No, I came by the beach.”

“And what were the wild waves saying?” she asked, smiling honestly and fondly down on his upturned face.

“They seemed to sing to me of love and you, Clara,” he answered, in the same joyous manner, and drawing her towards him he kissed her tenderly, passionately, and there was no need for declaring the love that filled his heart and trembled on his lips, and yet he did so in words that filled her heart with mingled joy and fear—joy, for they were such as no young girl could have heard

unmoved when addressed to herself—and a great fear, as she thought of her father, and all his words flashed on her memory. She grew pale, and even when Derval's kisses were pressed upon her cheek in that sequestered place, she glanced round her fearfully.

"And you love me in return, Clara, my own Clara?" he murmured, caressing her tenderly after their first incoherences were over.

"Yes, oh yes, Derval, I love you!" she replied.

"It is said to be fortunate for us, that the future is a sealed book," said he, drawing her head and face caressingly into his neck and his breast, "yet I should like to have known that the little girl whose life I saved in Bermuda was to be my wife—my own darling wife—in the years to come!"

*His wife!*

The sweet assumption made her tears flow fast, and hot and bitter tears they were. The intensity of his love had touched her, and delighted her heart; but these words recalled her father's remarks and injunctions, and even while Derval spoke and she responded, while joining with him in the delirious joy of the present, she had the chilling and terrible fear, that this great love and his suit would prove—all nonsense in the future, and never come to anything!

I was an awful conviction or fear to have at such a moment, and the intensity of her

agitation, her sobs and tears, attracted the attention of Derval.

"My own darling," he asked, inquiringly, "why all those tears?"

"My father, Derval,"

"You dread his opposition—so do I; but I would not have him ashamed of me, if you are not—my own love!"

"Derval—we leave this for Paris to-morrow morning. In the joy of seeing you, I almost forgot it," she continued, sobbing heavily.

"To-morrow—oh heavens, Clara! And I! next day for a ship—a few days whole seas will be between us! We sail for the Cape."

"It is awful to think, Derval, that we may pass out of each others' lives, and be as if we never met—never known each other!"

"Why—how?" he asked regarding her anxiously.

"What can such a secret and forbidden love as ours, with such a separation, lead to? a separation without a place or period for meeting again, and without a means of hearing of each others' lives, safety, or happiness."

As she spake her pearly teeth were set, and there came into her face something of the expression that Derval had seen it wear in the boat on the last occasion, force of character and strength of resolution, young though she was.

As the reader may conjecture, the sketch of the famous Nutcracking Rock was never finished.



“ I shall ever thank heaven for the impulse that sent me to meet you to-day, darling Clara,” said he, as they reached the spot at which they would be compelled to separate. “ We must, and shall, meet again when I return, for I shall seek you out, wherever you are, and we must think of each other every day and every hour. Till then—oh, my love, till then ! ”

Much more was said, brokenly and incoherently, and they lingered so long, that at last she had to leave him, blinded in tears, and with one long and clinging kiss they parted, as so many lovers have done before, and will do so again.

They had exchanged rings and locks of hair in the most orthodox fashion. It was arranged that Rookleigh should be the medium through which their correspondence should be conducted, their letters being mutually, if necessary, sent under cover to him. There could be no harm in their hearing of each other secretly, they thought, and deemed such an institution necessary for their happiness—their very existence, indeed ; for both were rash, young, loving, and enthusiastic, and both, too, were somewhat ignorant of the conventional ways of the world ; and to Rookleigh now they both mutually looked for succour in the great love that bound their hearts together.

Though his heart was weary with the keen sorrow of their separation, Derval felt full of bright hope for the future—that hope which

furnishes all our Chateaux in Espagne, or in the air—"hope that lends us alabaster bricks and golden mortar to build these castles withal; hope that turns the hue of the stalest loaf into the richest plum-cake, and the smallest of beer into the mellowest of Burgundy."

As if chance were already beginning to favour him, Derval, who did not, and never would visit the villa at Finglecombe, on returning to the hotel found his brother Rookleigh awaiting him there.

"You asked me the other day if I would do you a favour, Rook," said he, "and I promised to do it—though I was in a great hurry."

"Yes—Miss Hampton was waiting for you on the beach. I saw you meet—well?"

"You must in turn do a favour for me—and I am sure you will, old fellow!" added Derval, and he placed a hand affectionately on his brother's shoulder, feeling at that moment, in the great joy of being loved by Clara, that he forgave him everything, and could love him too.

He then related to Rookleigh much that had passed between himself and Clara—told of their secret engagement—secret, at least, as yet; showed her engagement-ring, but failed to see the sneer of Rookleigh's lip, as he kissed it with what the latter deemed idiotic ardour; and in the end, begged him to be the medium through whom their correspondence was to be conducted; and to

this Rookleigh, affecting demurrage, ultimately consented, for which he was extravagantly thanked and well-nigh embraced by Derval, who said :

“And now, Rook, dear old boy, what is the favour you wanted of me—in what can I serve you?”

An unfathomable expression stole over the face of Rookleigh at that moment, and his pale green shifty hazel eyes perhaps never looked so shifty. Skilfully veiled hatred, malice, and anticipated triumph were mingling there; but Derval, whose heart and thoughts were utterly strangers to passions such as these, could little have conceived they were so near him.

We have said that both Mrs. Hampton and Rookleigh resented Derval's intimacy with Lord Oakhampton, and the revengeful feeling of the half-brother eventually took a very remarkable form.

Seeing that Rookleigh seemed embarrassed, Derval pressed him to say what favour he required of him.

“I want a thousand pounds sorely on loan just now,” said Rookleigh, in a very measured voice, while avoiding his brother's eye; “I know you have more than double that sum lying at your bankers, as you have scarcely drawn a penny of what our good father left you.”

“He left me so little and you so much, Rook, that I marvel greatly you can want any more, especially from a poor devil like

me; but you are heartily welcome to the thousand; and as for dear Clara's letters—"

"They will be fully attended to. Thank you, dear Derval, I knew you would assist me if you could. My monetary annoyance is a very temporary one indeed."

"There you are—and welcome!" exclaimed Derval, as with a dart of his pen he filled up a cheque and handed it to his brother, who, after carefully placing it in his pocket-book, drew forth a document of somewhat portentous aspect.

"Why—what is this?" said Derval.

"Knowing that you would give me the money, and that it would be necessary to give you some admission or receipt for it, I had this prepared, as time is short."

"True, I must be off in twenty-four hours. But what is the meaning of all this, Rook? The cheque is a crossed one—and I can trust you—can you not trust yourself?"

Rookleigh's rather pale face was crossed by a blush as he said—

"We never know what may happen, and if you are to marry Clara Hampton, as I hope you will, all the money you can scrape together will be necessary."

"But, man alive! what is all this you have written here?" exclaimed Derval; "it looks like a title-deed—a marriage settlement—or a bill in chancery. Surely all this raggabash is not necessary between you and me!"

"For legal purposes it is—you, as a sailor,

are ignorant of the ridiculous tautology of legal composition ; but if you will affix your ordinary signature, witnessed by me, in these two places, without troubling you to read it, we shall post it to old De Murrer for security in his hands."

"All right, old fellow, I'll do anything you like but read over all that rigmarole," replied Derval, who dashed off his signature at the places indicated, and the document was enclosed in an envelope, addressed to their mutual agent at Gray's Inn for preservation, and placed in the usual receptacle at the hotel for letters to be posted.

There is no doubt that it was extremely culpable and negligent of Derval to sign that document as he did, without once troubling himself by an examination of its contents and nature—all the more so was he culpable, from the past knowledge he had of Rookleigh's general character ; but his correspondence with Clara was uppermost then in his thoughts, and when the half-brothers parted for the night, there came into Rookleigh's face a diabolical smile, and he laughed, as he took his homeward way muttering to himself—

"How easily that fool allowed himself to be chiselled out of everything ; but he is a sailor, ignorant of land life, for sailors go round and round the world but never into it !"

And again he laughed loudly.

On the morrow, the pretty villa at Bayview

was tenantless; the shrine was empty, so Derval gladly welcomed the hour that took him from Finglecombe, and the change of scene and occupation that came with it.

Lord Oakhampton had seen of late the preoccupation of his daughter's thoughts, and knew the cause thereof. Hence this sudden Parisian trip; after which a season in London would, he hoped, find another whose presence might obliterate what he deemed to be a foolish, a girlish, and *outré* fancy for Derval Hampton.

Ere the *Amethyst* sailed, the latter wrote to her under cover to Rookleigh, who was to discover Lord Oakhampton's address, and contrive some means of having it delivered.

The letter, full of passionate love and longing, of the tender little incoherences in which all lovers indulge, and many prayerful hopes for the future, duly reached the hands of his brother; but it was fortunate for Derval's peace of mind that he did not see the strange and horrible smile that crept over the face of Rookleigh as he *perused* it, and then tossed it into the fire.

The latter was the receptacle of most of its successors, and of Clara's too.

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## CHAPTER X.

“DEEPER THAN E’EN PLUMMET SOUNDED.”

DERVAL was back to his old work on the sea, but now it had lost all zest, and even the love for and hope of adventure had gone out of him. His whole soul and existence seemed to centre in the image of Clara, and his mind was never weary of dwelling upon it, and all the minutiae of his late sojourn at Finglecombe, and all that had come of it.

She loved him; he had the dearest and sweetest assurance of that, and they were engaged—solemnly engaged; but how, and when was the end to be? Their future was painfully vague! He could scarcely hope for her father’s consent, and without it he feared that he would never win Clara for his wife, as he knew, but too well, that though the name and blood were the same, their relative positions in life—in that “society” in which she moved—were different, far apart, and that—as yet—he had no place therein.

His imagination was fertile in the art of self-torment; and still more did it become so,

as time and distance increased between him and their parting hour and parting place ; and, after skirting the Bay of Biscay, that turbulent corner of the seas where, at times, all their storms seem gathered together, the *Amethyst* shaped her course towards Madeira.

On the lone sea by day and in the silent watches of the starry night of what could he think but *her*, and the new and hitherto unknown emotion she had kindled in his heart !

He hailed with joy and anxiety the Pico Ruivo as it rose from the sea, and the *Amethyst* ran into the roads of Funchal, where she lay-to while Joe Grummet went ashore for any ship-letters that might have come ahead of them by the steam-packet.

Letters there were for the Captain, Harry Bowline, and others on board, but not one for him, and his spirit began to fall. He strove hard to console himself with the doctrine of chances and mischance, and hoped letters might await him at Ascension or the Cape of Good Hope.

Rough old Joe Grummet, a shrewd observer, especially of those for whom he had a regard, saw how his countenance changed when the letters were distributed and none appeared for him.

"I was sorry to see you so disappointed, sir," said Joe, as they walked the deck together that night, after the Pico Ruivo had sunk into the sea, "but I think it is often better not to get letters when in blue water,



for we can't amend evil things then, as we might when ashore; and I had a shipmate, who lost his life through getting one—and out of the smallest post-office in the whole world.”

“Where is that, Joe?”

“It is a barrel that swings from the outermost rock of the sheer mountains that overhang the Straits of Magellan, right opposite to La Tierra del Fuego. Every ship passing opens it to place in letters or take them out, and undertakes their transit, if possible. It hangs there at an iron chain, washed, beaten, and battered by wind and storm; but no post-office, even in London, is more secure from robbers. Well, this poor fellow laid well out on the foretopsail yard, while the ship was thrown in the wind, to see what letters were in the barrel. There was but one, and it was for himself. It was from his wife, but was sealed with black. Sitting outside the yard he read it, then a cry escaped him, and falling into the sea between the ship and the rocks he was seen no more. The letter fluttered aft to where I stood near the taffrail. It told poor Bill of his mother's death, months and months before, and the shock had been too much for him. But you have come back to the *Amethyst* sorely changed, surely Mr. Hampton?”

“How, Joe?”

“Why—all the fun and cheeriness are quite gone out of you.”

“ They should not, Joe, as there is no reason therefor. But were you ever in love, Joe ? ”

“ Bless my heart, many and many times, as long as my pay lasted, and I had to come aboard again.”

“ Ah ! Joe,” said Derval, laughing, “ I fear you don’t know what love is.”

“ Don’t I, though ! ” exclaimed old Grummet, as he bit a quid off the twist of pigtail that was always in his right-hand pocket. “ I often boast myself as one of the not-to-be-done squadron of the Royal Naval Reserve, Mr. Hampton ; yet I am always done brown when I am on shore, which is the reason I generally stick close to the ship, as one can’t fall in love when in blue water and the anchor’s catted.”

“ Joe, the love I mean is the merging of your whole existence in that of another ; placing every hope and wish on the will of another ; living a glad, wild, feverish dream, with the strange sense that without that other all life is worthless.”

“ Well, I ’m blessed ! On that other, as you call her, I have too often spent every ’tarnal penny, and come to grief in the end, and found myself toeing a line before the beak. No, no ! love ain’t for me now, and for you, perhaps, it as well you didn’t get any letters, for perhaps your girl may have slipped from her moorings and gone foreign with some other fellow.”

Derval laughed at Joe’s phraseology, but said, “ This is perhaps my last trip, Joe, and

if I leave the ship I hope to see you a mate of her."

"Mate—no, no, Mr. Hampton; I ain't used to the luxuriance of a cabin, where knives and forks and tea-cups is used; and where the grogot, the bread-barge, and the mess-kid ain't known."

The wind was fair, the weather delightful, and the *Amethyst* in due time crossed the equator.

"Let me be patient, let me be patient!" sighed Derval, when the volcanic peaks of Ascension, the rendezvous of our African squadron, came in sight, and the *Amethyst*, having sprung one of her topmasts, ran in to refit. Letters for her came off in a Government boat. There were some for nearly every man on board save Derval, whose anxiety was fast becoming painful.

As at Madeira, he wrote and left a passionate and appealing letter to Clara, under cover to his brother, and sailed in hope for the Cape. Hope; he could not abandon that! Was Clara ill? had Rookleigh mismanaged their correspondence? or had Lord Oakhampton discovered and intercepted all their letters? Clara could address letters to the ship—letters which would follow him all over the world; but he remembered that his movements were somewhat unknown to her, and gathered a little mental relief from the idea. But from what did the silence of Rookleigh arise? He might at least write and state that he had no letters to enclose!

Why did she never write to him ? he was incessantly asking himself. Where were the fondly promised letters that Rookleigh was to transmit to him, in exchange for those transmitted to him for her—passionate letters, expressing all the complete and wild abandonment of his heart and soul to an earthly love, to which he had given up all that God had given him.

Times there were when already he began to have strange and terrible doubts of her. Yet, why had she been so sweet, so kind, so loving in her manner to him, if she was but luring him into misery and disappointment ? She could not be so cruel—his very life was in those little white hands of hers—hands that he had so often covered with kisses. Then he thrust these aching thoughts aside, and hoped and trusted that time would unravel and explain all ; but as yet a black cloud, a pall, seemed to have come between him, his past existence, and Clara !

In the life he knew she must lead in the gay world, where she participated in all that fashion, wealth, and rank could surround her with, was she forgetting him ? would be his tormenting thought anon ; and had what he deemed a mutual love been to her but a seaside romance, a summer flirtation ? Oh ! what was *he*, he would mutter, that she, a peer's daughter, in her beauty and her bloom, should remember him ?

If true to him, at all risks and hazards, even of her father's anger, she should have written

to him ; and passing over Rookleigh, at the same risks and hazards, he should have written direct to her, and ended his cruel anxiety if possible ; but he knew not her address, or whether she had returned from Paris to England.

“I thought that I had too many reasons for being happy,” said he, “a sure sign of grief to come — of sorrow close at hand.”

At last, after a voyage (including her delay at Ascension) of more than two months, the *Amethyst* hauled up for Table Bay, came to anchor, and the boats came off from Cape Town.

“At last, at last—surely now !” exclaimed Derval as a letter was given him, and he opened it with trembling hands. It was from Rookleigh, in answer to one he had written from Madeira, saying that “Miss Hampton had never sent a single letter for transmission,” and nothing more.

What had happened ? What did this cruel mystery mean ?

He wrote her one cold and brief letter, almost a farewell, under cover to Rookleigh, and then an illness and fever came upon him while the ship lay at Cape Town, and through the long days and nights there, he lay in his little cabin, almost mad with his mental misery—a misery athwart which there came no gleam of light or hope ; and when next he came on deck, after many weeks of illness, he found that the *Amethyst*, instead of returning

to England, had been freighted for Batavia under Captain Talbot, and was working out of Table Bay, and heading eastward for the Indian Ocean !

Thus it would be long before he should see or hear of Clara again, and learn the worst that fate had in store for him.

How little could he imagine, that all *he* was suffering—the keenest pangs of doubt, anxiety, sorrow, and disappointment—were suffered by Clara. Ignorant of his precise address and whereabouts, the poor girl wrote to him in secrecy again and again—wrote to him lovingly, then despondently, and anon with surprise and upbraiding, under cover to Rookleigh, posting her epistles with her own hand, and trusting none other—posting them with a prayer on her lips ; and to the recipient—the supposed medium of their love affair—the mutual correspondence proved a source of supreme merriment, and even to his mother too ; and in the end the fire received it all.

At last Clara knew not what to think ; she could but wait and hope, but ceased to use her pen. The conviction that she had stooped—actually condescended—in the acceptance of his love, added to the poignancy of what she felt, and filled her, at times, with indignation at conduct so singular and unwarrantable.

Fear of Derval's vengeance, if his duplicity ever came to light, the malevolent Rookleigh had none ; but he laughed curiously when he thought of the folly of which his sailor brother had been guilty in signing the unread docu-

ment! And as for the loss of his lady-love, "Derval," he thought with a chuckle, "will no doubt take to poetry, and writing sonnets on female inconstancy."

A somewhat unexpected turn was given to the then state of the affair, by Lord Oakhampton once more taking up his abode temporarily at Bayview, in Finglecombe, the saline air of which he rightly or wrongly—for our story it matters little which—conceived to be beneficial to his health. This to Clara was most distasteful, as the entire locality was—for her—full of associations of the past, that the sooner she forgot the better for her own happiness.

It was about this time that Derval's last letter from Clara, written before his illness at the Cape, came to the hands of Rookleigh, and conceiving, from the animus of that in which it was enclosed, it might seem to widen the breach between the lovers, he, by the assistance of little hot water to moisten the envelope, made himself master of the contents, and adding a bitter postscript in imitation of Derval's writing, he reclosed it, and, aware that Lord Oakhampton was absent in London, resolved to deliver it in person, and thus achieve, perhaps, an introduction to Clara.

Inspired by a new and very remarkable scheme, he repaired to Bayview Villa, and sending up his card, was ushered into the drawing-room.

The apartment was a double one, divided

by an archway, in which hung curtains of blue silk, edged with silver lace, and festooned partly with white silk cord and tassels. There was a sound, the rustling of a dress in the inner room; but at first Rookleigh saw only a white hand and arm—an arm so taper round and marvellously beautiful that he had never before seen anything like it. A diamond bracelet clasped the wrist. The hand slightly parted the curtains—for Clara was there, with his card in her hand, striving to still the painful beating of her heart.

Then her whole figure appeared: a girl tall, slender, perfect in grace and symmetry, her dark violet eyes full of earnest inquiry, the sweet lips and mignonne face, all expressive of it too. Lovely, dainty, and refined, Clara Hampton stood before him.

Would she offer him that lovely hand, permit him to touch it? was his first thought; but in a second more it was placed confidently within his own; while Clara, who blushed deeply at first, now grew pale as the new-fallen snow.

Never before had he stood in the presence of a girl so quietly patrician in bearing and appearance.

“Mr. Rookleigh Hampton?” said she, glancing at the card, and with enforced calmness of tone and manner.

“Derval’s brother,” replied the traitor, and no other introduction was necessary, though at the mention of Derval’s name, he could see how anxiety mingled with *hauicur* in her sensitive lips and eyes.



"You are, of course, aware of the arrangement my brother made about—about your letters?" said Rookleigh.

"You sent him all mine?" asked Clara in a breathless voice.

"All—and I have one here for you—whether a reply, or not, I cannot say."

"Only one!"

"The first and only one," replied Rookleigh, who, with all his effrontery and duplicity, felt that he never before stood in such a presence, and could scarcely remember how he answered her; for his mind was filling fast with admiration, his heart beat fast, and his brain seemed to burn.

"A letter from Derval at last! His first letter too—yet it would explain!" were her first ideas. "Be seated, Sir, and for a moment or two, pray do excuse me."

She retired back beyond the silk hangings, and rapidly made herself, more than once, mistress of the contents of that letter, one of coldness, brevity, and farewell—farewell without further explanation—a letter the strange tenor of which startled and bewildered her.

Clara's agitation and confusion were excessive; but sorrow succeeded to surprise in her heart, and indignation to sorrow.

"All is over and ended between your brother and myself, Mr. Rookleigh," said she, with a painful swelling in her slender white throat.

"His letter displeases you?" asked Rook-

leigh, scarcely knowing what to say, and feeling his heart for a moment fail him.

"Read it," said she, haughtily.

He scarcely required to do so, yet he affected to peruse it, and then knit his narrow brows.

"How cold this letter is! but in it there lurks some mystery," said he.

"What mystery, Sir?"

"I know not—I only know that above all things the human heart is deceitful!"

After a pause, during which both remained silent, and Clara had nervously, half unconsciously, crushed and crumpled up the odious and disappointing note—for it was scarcely even a letter—in her small and tremulous hand, Rookleigh proceeded to make apologies for the strange conduct of his unworthy brother, and to express his own pain, shame, sorrow, and so forth, in terms well chosen and uttered.

"He is peculiar," he added, "always was so; thus his oddity of disposition caused him to be sent to sea. I can assure you, my dear Miss Hampton, that he never got on well with the mother or me, or with anyone else, in fact. Then, sailors will be sailors Miss Hampton, and are said to have loves in every port."

He continued to linger and utter his regrets, till the silence of Clara indicated that she was weary of his presence and desired to be left alone—alone to her own reflections and misery—and the young squire of Fingle-

combe bowed himself out, well pleased with his morning's work, and resolved that this should not be his last visit to Bayview Villa.

He was well aware that Clara Hampton, though just turned eighteen, had been the queen of the last season in London, and that though other queens were there as proud and pure and marvellously fair, yet there was none who apparently had remained so unspoiled by the homage offered. Flattery left her untouched; and beautiful and nobly born though she was, no weekly journal yet dared to make her portrait an inducement to purchasers, and no photo of her appeared in any London shop-window to court the comments, admiration, or ribaldry of every passing "cad" or ruffian.

It has been said—with what truth we know not—that no idle man can resist the temptation of seeking to fascinate a handsome girl, while at the same time eclipsing another man. Thus, could Rookleigh have any compunction about eclipsing that half-brother of whose proper position in the family he was so jealous, and whom he had been so studiously reared by his mother to view with a rancorous and most unholy hate?

Certainly not, and to this amiable end, Rookleigh resolved to leave no means untried to introduce himself to Lord Oakhampton.

Chance meetings—chance apparently—in the railway train, and elaborate civilities

proffered by Rookleigh, the offers of cigars, periodicals, and so forth, led to an exchange of words; and though the peer was unpleasantly struck by the young man's *name*, and then knew precisely who he was, for certain cogent legal reasons he deemed it wise and well to be civil to him, and an invitation to Bayview followed—an invitation which Rookleigh was not slow to accept; and soon, by making himself useful in fifty different ways, he became then a regular sea-side visitor; though, as the brother of Derval, his welcome was of a somewhat mingled kind by both father and daughter.

Mrs. Hampton was intensely gratified by this unexpected intimacy, of which, however, by failing health, she was, perhaps luckily, unable to avail herself.

To Rookleigh the idea did occur at times, as to how he was to account to Derval for the non-transmission of Clara's letters for him to the ship, the owners, or their agents abroad?

Well—that was a matter for future consideration; meantime he had the signed bond, and that laid Derval at his mercy!

The lovers were meanwhile beginning to think—nay, to be assured—that their worst fears were becoming realised; Clara deeming that Derval, as his brother had alleged, was “a very sailor”; and he, that Clara was only true to the instincts of her cold-blooded class, and had already forgotten him, or cast

him off, for some new, richer, and titled object; and Rookleigh rubbed his long lean hands, and puckered up his green eyes with quaint delight, as the plot seemed to thicken.

Clara had never striven even to like him, though the brother of that Derval she had loved so well—nay, loved in secret still. She saw the base metal in his composition, and always detected a something in the tone of his voice, and in the expression of his face, that roused an undefinable emotion of distrust, as belying in some way the ease and nonchalance of manner he affected.

“We are a kind of cousins, you know, Miss Hampton,” said he one day, as he hung over her at the piano.

“I do not know that we are,” she replied coldly

“Permit me to explain to you the degree,” and he proceeded to do so with extreme accuracy, as he had just been studying the matter with Mr. De Murrer, affecting to act in the interest of his absent brother, but in reality for his *own* selfish purposes. But she only laughed aloud, and said:

“It is rather remote.”

“It would not be thought so, in Scotland.”

She remembered her father’s reply on a similar occasion, and merely shrugged her shoulders. Had Derval claimed the kindred blood, her view of it might have been different.

The poor girl's heart was ever beating with "a vague unrest" she could well understand, but had a difficulty in concealing and acting a part to those around her, to the watchful eyes of her father especially, and he began to wonder whether he had acted wisely in opening his house to Rookleigh Hampton.

The latter now learned that the *Amethyst* had sailed for Batavia, which would ensure, even if she returned direct to England, an absence of at least eight months on the part of Derval—eight months, of which Rookleigh made, as we shall show, a terrible use.

"Sailed for Batavia—sailed for Batavia!" he repeated. Fate was playing into his hands indeed, for long ere Derval could return, the game would be his own!

So "deeper than ever plummet sounded," was the deep villany of Rookleigh Hampton.

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## CHAPTER XI.

## A CRUSHED HEART.

IN detailing plot and counterplot, cunning and selfishness, doubt, despair, and no small agony of spirit, we have much to compress in the latter pages of this our history

As the squire of Finglecombe, Rookleigh was, in every way, a more eligible *parti* than his sailor brother ; thus, confident in having eventually the countenance of Lord Oakhampton, the former cared very little about the opposition of Clara, his whole anxiety being to play his cards well, and have her completely in his power, ere the return of Derval upset his plans ; and this unexpected voyage to Batavia gave him far more time to do so than he could at first have hoped for.

Into his nefarious schemes his mother entered *con amore*. Derval removed or circumvented in any way, *her* son would marry the heiress of Lord Oakhampton, and eventually might succeed to the title. Every scruple died in her heart !

“Do you make any progress with her,

Rookleigh?" that amiable lady asked one day.

"None—as yet," he answered sulkily.

"Why, dear?"

"She is always brooding over Derval."

"Though all letters have been intercepted?"

"Yes; but I have plenty of time, however, before he returns—if he returns at all."

"At all! Why not get up a rumour that he is drowned—or married?"

"Not a bad idea, Mother; anyway I shall be sure to succeed," replied Rookleigh, laughing, with something of the contemptuous confidence of youth, and ignorance of the world.

Unaware of the secret impulses that were working, Clara disliked the apparent intimacy between her father and young Rookleigh Hampton. She disliked his constant visits and something in the bearing he was assuming towards herself. The little toleration she had for him at first, as Derval's brother, passed away with the hope of ever hearing of Derval more, and she had—she knew not why—a secret antipathy to Rookleigh.

The latter felt this, and all his attempts to gain her confidence, even to engage her in a pleasant conversation, came to nothing.

Coming upon her one day as she sat on the beach, she seemed so unconscious of his approach, that he came close to her side quite unnoticed.



Then she looked up at him and bowed, but her face scarcely wore the semblance of a smile as she did so.

"Of what were you thinking?" he asked, as he lay down on the pebbles by her feet.

"Nothing," she replied curtly.

"How smooth and pleasant the water looks—will you let me row you out a little way?"

"No, thanks," she replied almost with asperity.

"You always seem to—to doubt me, Miss Hampton."

"You think so?" said she, with her lip curling slightly.

"I am sorry to say that I feel it instinctively."

"I do not doubt your honour, at all events."

"My truth, then?" said he, colouring.

"Are they not the same thing?"

"Not always—unless I deceive myself."

"You may—but not me," replied the girl, almost sharply, for his manner worried her, and she rose up.

He grew pale with anger, love, and even hate, curiously mingled, and thought, as he started to his feet, and walked on by her side, "I'll crush you yet, my proud damsel!"

After a little pause, he said

"Whatever you think of me, Miss Hampton, I trust you do not deem me a worshipper of Mammon?"

Now, as this was precisely what she did

think of him, young though he was, she laughed and replied :

“The conversation is becoming, to say the least of it, peculiar and personal. What can it possibly matter to you, how or what I think of you?”

Dissembling his rage at this contemptuous question, he said.

“It matters much, indeed; all would wish to stand well in your estimation—and I more than all, Miss Hampton.”

“Well—are not most people worshippers of Mammon?”

“More, I hope, worshippers of beauty.”

His smile became a leer, and while irritation gathered in her heart, she said :

“I know nothing of either—I have lived only some eighteen years in the world, Mr. Hampton. But why do you cross-question me?” she added impetuously.

“Pardon me, because to me all your thoughts are of the deepest interest, and I——”

“I do not understand all this,” interrupted Clara, with increasing annoyance; “but here is our gate, and I must wish you good morning, Mr. Hampton.”

“Good morning.” He lifted his hat and turned away, with a baffled and angry emotion in his mind, and an expression in his eyes, that, had Clara seen it, would certainly have startled her; but so far as she was concerned, sorrow, annoyance, and evil were fated to come thick and fast now.

Rookeleigh's law agents were meanwhile perfecting the evidences of his own and his brother's claims successively to the title held then by Lord Oakhampton. We have already detailed the angry interview between his lordship and Mr. De Murrer, and the alarm with which it inspired him ; and this emotion was renewed when, from that gentleman, acting ostensibly in the interest of the absent Derval, but in reality under the secret pressure of Rookeleigh, came a terrifying legal missive, to the effect that the whole chain of evidence was now complete and would shortly be laid before the world !

"There is but one way of compromising with the absent heir," wrote Mr. De Murrer, good-naturedly : "your lordship has no direct heir ; Mr. Derval Hampton, and then his brother, are the next in succession ; thus, if you do not marry again, the claim may take its course after your demise, if the heirs assent thereto."

"Marry again—and at my years !" thought Lord Oakhampton, bitterly ; "of that there is no danger" ; but as he thought of his daughter, the beads of perspiration started on his brow. He thought of the mutual regard his daughter and Derval had for each other ; he saw a means of compromise the lawyer did not think of, and wrote him to that effect, begging him not to move in the matter until the return of Derval, but kept his own counsel, and said nothing to Clara on what he deemed their impending ruin ; and his

natural *hauteur* made him shrink from speaking on the matter, as yet, to Rookleigh Hampton.

The latter continued his visits as usual—the whole impending suit being supposed to be Derval's; but Clara kept so sedulously out of his way, that he could not use the opportunities he had, of urging his regard for her; thus, he left no means untried to win over Lord Oakhampton to his side.

Old, far beyond his years, in calculating villany, Rookleigh knew well, that though he might persuade Clara, by a false newspaper notice, that Derval was dead, the truth or falsity thereof would soon be proved; he thought it would be better to assure her in some manner of his supposed perfidy, and hence make her more open to the proposals of a new suitor, and the dedication of that time to revenge, which otherwise might be naturally dedicated to grief; and at Bideford he was not long in discovering one to be his accomplice in this deceit—a broken-down actress, or rather a dancing-girl belonging to a travelling troupe, whose acquaintance he had made with considerable facility about this time.

The girl was pretty, clever, and attractive in appearance, while destitute of nearly every scruple — so far as conscience was concerned.

“ You will do this for me, my dear Sally ? ” said Rookleigh, as he sat toying with her over some wine, in one of the inn windows that

overlooked the river and beautiful valley at Bideford.

"Of course I will—like a bird, old fellow, if you pay me," was the confident reply.

"Pay you—that I will, my pet—and well, too! You will have to act the dear, dear little devoted but deserted wife."

"To the life, Rook—to the life."

"Then a hundred pounds shall be yours," said Rookleigh, with something like a groan, as he deeply loved his money, and the girl had flatly refused to be his accomplice for less, and received half the sum in the first instance.

"Then give me a kiss, you dear old fellow, and I will soon earn the other instalment," said the young lady airily, as she got a vehicle and drove off at once to Finglecombe, kissing her hand to Rookleigh as long as he was in view.

We shall soon see the result of their compact.

It was autumn now, the fields were no longer yellow with billows of golden grain, as the breeze swept over the uplands; the white cups of the water-lilies had disappeared from pool and pond; the beeches changed their hue from green to russet, and the oak leaves were turning red; the evening sun had sunk beyond the waters of the bay, and Clara, seated alone, in the recess of a window, with an unread book in her lap, and her eyes fixed dreamily on the deepening shadows of the land and sea, felt more than usually depressed, when she was startled by a servant announcing

"Mrs. Hampton," and a girl of somewhat attractive appearance, though rather flippant and nervous in manner, and somewhat shabbily clad, was ushered in.

Clara's first thought was of Rookleigh's mother, but the years of the visitor showed she was mistaken.

"You gave the name of Hampton?" said Clara, inquiringly, as her visitor remained silent.

"Yes, Ma'am—yes, Miss—Mrs. Derval Hampton, I am."

"You—you?" exclaimed Clara, startled and bewildered; "I do not understand."

"But you soon will," replied the girl, affecting to sob; "if I might take a seat, Miss—I am weary and faint and ill, and very sick at heart, too."

Clara trembled very much, though unaware of what all this was to lead to, but pointed to a chair, on the extreme edge of which the visitor seated herself, and seemed very far from being at ease. She was a little awed by her surroundings; then came an emotion of envy and anger at Clara for her perfect costume and beauty, her superior position and supreme purity of aspect, manner, and character; but no emotion of compunction for the pain she was about to inflict, or of shame for the deliberate falsehood she was about to tell, came to the soul of Miss Sally Trix.

"And what may your business be with me?" asked Clara.

"Only to know, Miss, if you have heard of

late from my husband, as he has ceased to write to me?"

Clara felt herself grow sick and pale at this degrading question; but she asked with much apparent calmness:

"And, pray, who may your husband be, girl, that I should know aught of him?"

"Mr. Derval Hampton of the ship *Amethyst*, who, I understand, engaged himself to you, while knowing well that I—his lawful wife, whom he left to starve—was living! I don't blame you, Miss," she continued, weeping to all appearance, for she could act her part well and professionally, "for you knew no better; but, thank heaven, I come in time to save you and unmask him!"

There ensued a pause now—but a pause in which Clara could hear the beating of her heart, and then she asked:

"When, and where, were you married?"

"In London, Miss, and just after his last voyage; Captain Talbot knows me well, and so does his brother Mr. Rookleigh."

"And why did he leave you?" asked Clara, with a strange and husky voice.

"Because I am poor; he despised me as soon as he knew you, and used to go off with you in a boat on the bay, and leave me to break my heart weeping on the shore; for many a time I saw you both. For what was I but a toy to be played with, and cast aside when he was tired of me; but I am his wedded wife, as this ring and the register can testify!"

The stroller played her part to perfection, with every word planting a knife in the heart of the shrinking listener; and deeming that now she had said and done enough by the few details she threw in to convince the latter that she had been cruelly deceived, Miss Trix sobbed heavily, bowed herself out, and quitted Bayview Villa with all speed, considering that the character she had taken in this "cast" was—in a monetary sense—the best engagement she had ever made.

Clara sat long in the dusk as if turned to stone, but not a tear escaped her. This sudden revelation of Derval's supposed perfidy could not give her now the pain it might have done in time past; his conduct had partly prepared her for some such catastrophe as this; and yet how antagonistic—how unlike his open, gentle, candid, and earnest outward character, did this accumulation of secret perfidy seem!

And that tawdily dressed damsel had declared herself his wife! *His wife!*

She recalled the time when that word, as a term of endearment to herself, had fallen so sweetly on her startled ear; then a bitter, bitter sense of having been insulted and degraded, was added to her still more keen sense of utter disappointment in Derval; and to her guileless and innocent mind, no doubt, no thought of suspicion that she might be deluded, ever occurred.

"You have had an unexpected visitor, Miss Hampton?" said Rookleigh, eyeing her pale face keenly next day.



"Yes."

"Ah—so have I, one who has explained all."

"All?"

"My brother's peculiar perfidy, I mean."

"Yes."

"A perfidy for which I blush! You see that it has been as I suggested, sailors have entanglements everywhere; but this is rather more than that—a legal marriage."

"Oh, how dared he—how dared he!" she exclaimed, as she clenched her little white hands, and the look of firm resolve she would assume at times stole swiftly into her sweet face.

Some weeks passed on; Rookleigh became impatient for action, and during these weeks a thoughtful and shadowy expression deepened in the once bright face of Clara, till it became one of such woeful fear, that the heart of the father alternately bled with sorrow for her, and swelled with indignation against Derval.

Every way Clara was a desirable wife, one of whose beauty, at least, any man might well be proud. She had inflamed the senses and fired the vanity of Rookleigh Hampton—not touched his heart, for he had none, in the way of a lover, to touch; thus, in the pursuit of his scheme he could think, speak, and act, with consummate coolness of head and demeanour.

He was well-pleased to find that—thanks to the hints of his mother—the gossips of Finglecombe, to whom all his actions and

motives were objects of interest, already coupled his name seriously with that of Clara Hampton.

“Self-contained and well-balanced as she deems herself, this appearance of Derval’s wife *has* knocked her off her perch!” thought Rookleigh, with a chuckle, when one day his eye fell on her white hand, as it rested on the arm of a sofa, and he remarked that the ring, which he knew Derval had given to her, was no longer on her engaged finger. She had removed it—relinquished it—and Rookleigh took this as an infallible sign that she now concluded all was over between the absent one and herself.

“Good!” thought he, “good; I’ll make my innings now!”

And with a coolness and confidence far beyond his years, he, with the greatest deliberation, took the earliest opportunity of obtaining Lord Oakhampton’s permission to address his daughter.

“I should like to repair, if I possibly can do so, the evil my brother has done her, my lord. I do not understand how it is,” said he, “that I have gone on so far with her without the least encouragement; but a love for her has grown rapidly upon me, and this love has become a part of my life—my very existence.”

“You are very young to talk in this fashion,” said Lord Oakhampton, uneasily

“If she would but care for me!” sighed Rookleigh, assuming humility and timidity

"It is not my Clara's way to care for any man as he may probably care for her."

"Have I, then, your lordship's permission to propose?"

"Yes," said Lord Oakhampton, huskily, as he thought of his last communication from Mr. De Murrer of Gray's Inn, and felt himself, for the first time, the slave of circumstances, and between the horns of a dilemma. Indeed, life—save for the few monetary troubles that sent him to Bermuda—had gone so smoothly with his lordship that, until now, when the claim to his coronet began to take a tangible and legal form, he had no reason to suspect Fate of having the least intention of treating him scurvily.

And with that invincible effrontery and coolness which were a part of his nature, Rookleigh, feeling that to a certain extent both father and daughter were in his power, went at once to the latter, whom he found in the drawing-room alone; and, no longer abashed as he had been at first by her rare beauty and stately presence—for stately and patrician was the presence of Clara, even in her girlhood—he seated himself by her side, and endeavouring to take and retain her hand, said, with a nervousness which we thoroughly believe was assumed:

"Miss Hampton, I have your father's permission to drop the mask I have worn so long."

"What *do* you mean?" she asked, with unfeigned surprise.

“To learn, if I can, from your own lips, my fate.”

“Your fate, Sir!”

“The fate of the love I bear you. Miss Hampton—Clara, I love you, as you must have known ere now—I love you; and in return for mine will you give me back truth for truth, love for love, trust for trust, your heart, your life, as fully and freely as I give you mine?”

How glibly he rattled it all out! He had, probably, learned it out of some novel, for one might have thought he was in the habit of proposing every day.

Clara was, at first, astonished and startled, and a thousand things that she had taken no heed of, or entirely misunderstood, rushed clearly on her memory now. Already insulted, mocked, and deluded by one brother, was she to endure the deliberate and insolent love-making of another?

She rose and looked at him in silence, and with an expression of eye not favourable to his suit, at all events; but Rookleigh was by no means abashed, for he was one of those men to whom the apparently unattainable has a peculiar fascination. Clara, with difficulty, restrained her tears.

“Will you pardon me, if I have been presumptuous?” said he.

“On one condition.”

“Oh, name it!”

“That you never dare address me in this manner again, and never intrude upon me more!”

She was sweeping away with a queenly grace, when his voice arrested her :

"Miss Hampton, you had better think twice over this," said he, coarsely, "you may not disdain the hand of a man of wealth and position some day."

Her only reply was to ring the bell.

"Show this gentleman out," said she to the servant who appeared, and Rookleigh, baffled for the time, retired, with his heart swollen by passion and resentment.

When next he appeared before Clara, his manner was changed, and her appearance too.

Her father had set before the astounded girl the claim these brothers, Derval and Rookleigh Hampton, could advance to his title, his estates, and all that he possessed. That with them lay the power, or alternative, of waiting till his death gave them the means of quiet accession, or now declaring open war, and sweeping away wealth, position, rank, influence in Church, in State, and in society, by degrading him in his old age to the state of the merest commoner, and having him laughed at as a sham and interloper ; and the gentle heart of Clara died within her, as she beheld her father's agony, and read some of the communications that had lately come from Gray's Inn.

"To save me, darling—oh, my darling, you will consent to marry the young fellow," urged Lord Oakhampton, piteously.

"Yes, Papa," she replied in a whisper,

as he withdrew, saying, "God bless you, darling!" and Rookleigh took his place.

"Your father has placed all this matter plainly before you," said he, and triumph and passion glittered together in his eyes, as he surveyed the beauty of the crushed girl, who stood before him now with downcast face; "there is but one way to escape the evils that may—nay, must—come upon you and him, and that is a refuge under the shelter of my name."

"I do not quite understand you, Sir," she replied, with a dazed look in her eyes.

"As my wife, Clara?"

The words fell distinctly enough upon her ear—distinctly and deliberately were they uttered. She did not stir, moan, or weep, but every drop of blood left her face and lips—even the delicate hands he grasped so daringly in his; and a strange hunted and desperate yet defiant expression stole into her beautiful face and remained there.

"Speak, Clara; is your answer that which I venture now to hope and have a right to expect?"

Endearment was unnatural to him, and his tone and manner were more those of authority.

Still more deathly pale she grew; but her voiceless lips moved, and she sunk on the sofa insensible; but from that moment the arrangements for the wedding were carried forward without delay.

Still more did Fate seem to be playing into

the hands of Rookleigh, when in the shipping intelligence appeared a notice to the effect that the *Amethyst* had perished in a storm in the Indian Ocean, and that a vessel answering her description, with the flag of the Royal Naval Reserve flying at her gaff-peak, upside down in token of distress, had been seen to founder; and Rookleigh knew that in the fulness of time *he* would be Lord Oakhampton, if he had the grace to be patient and wait. Of this catastrophe Rookleigh made no mention to Clara, whose spirit seemed so low now that nothing could depress it further.

"Child, child," her father would often say, while caressing her fondly and with great commiseration, "by your marriage with one or other of these men I may die in possession of my title undegraded—undegraded, and at my death, it will go to one or the other."

"Oh that Derval had been worthy of me!" wailed the girl in her heart.

Old Patty Fripp was gone now to God's Acre, and with her ended another of "the innumerable simple and honest lives of pain and love, that are swept away like the dead leaves by the winds of autumn," and there was no one in Finglecombe now, save Mr. Asperges Laud, to lament for Derval Hampton, and, aware of Rookleigh's hatred of the latter, he bewailed his sorrowful destiny in strong language.

"Destiny brings stranger things to pass than ever you dream of," said Rookleigh, with a grimace of triumph.

“This bearing of yours is shameful!” exclaimed the old curate; “yea, it is indecent! What says the gospel of St. John?”

“Nothing that affects me.”

“Listen, ingrate! ‘He that loveth not, abideth in death. Whoso hateth his brother is a murderer. And you know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in himself.’”

But Rookleigh only laughed, and shrugged his shoulders contemptuously, at St. John and his gospel too.

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## CHAPTER XII.

## NEMESIS.

DURING the long voyage of nearly three thousand miles to Batavia, Derval's health and strength came back, but not his old elasticity of spirit. He had ever one thought—Clara! and the disappointment and mortification he endured were keen and bitter.

Now the once happy time of love and lingering at Finglecombe seemed, indeed, as an unreal mirage, a vanished oasis in the dull grey desert of his existence. He ceased now to seek for such explanations of her silence as his imagination might suggest; though times there were, when a great terror came over him, that she was dead; yet it was passing strange, that it was amid the mighty waste of the Indian ocean he was fated to hear some tidings of her—tidings that were, certainly, somewhat bewildering.

In latitude 12° south and longitude 100° west, the *Amethyst* spoke with a large steamer, from the Red Sea, bound to Australia, and from which Captain Talbot obtained some

London papers, which proved of keen interest, when so far from home, though they were a month or two old.

In one of these Derval saw, among fashionable gossip, a marriage as being on the tapis between "the only daughter of Lord Oakhampton and young Mr. Hampton of Finglecombe, Devonshire."

Derval could scarcely believe his eyes, as he read this strange notice again and again. What did the mystery mean—or to what or whom did it point? Could it be some mistake with regard to himself? Had Lord Oakhampton given to Clara his consent to their engagement. If so, whence her mysterious silence? That his half-brother, Rookleigh, was the person to whom the printed piece of gossip referred, never once occurred to honest Derval; but whatever it meant, the date of the paper, some six weeks old, assured him that she must have been at that period alive and well. This episode gave him much food for reflection, and his mind was full of it when the *Amethyst* encountered that terrible gale, in which she did not founder, though another vessel did so within sight of her.

The tornado, for such it was, struck her suddenly, at a time when, luckily for the ship and all on board, she was running about ten knots an hour, with all her sails close-reefed, through haze that thickened fast to warm rain. The rise of the whirlwind was instantaneous, and the fore and main topsails were blown clean out of the bolt-ropes, while a sea

was shipped that rolled aft leaving all on deck knee-deep in water.

The wind was not blowing steadily, but, strange to say, came in a series of rapid and dreadful gusts, tearing up the sea in such a fashion that the whole air was a mass of foam as high as the mainyard. The *Amethyst* careened heavily over to her port side, with her gunnel in the water, and her whole deck afloat with fragments of sail, ropes, spars, and blocks flying about. The masts bent like willow wands, and overhead all the loose rigging flew wildly about in loops and bights.

In addition to the thunder of the sea, and the deep hoarse bellowing of the gusty wind, was the crackling and crashing of blocks and ropes, of sails and of all loose objects, dashed hither and thither, as wave after wave deluged the deck.

Amid this hurly-burly of the elements, the mysterious paragraph was ever in Derval's mind, and he thought how hard it would be to perish now, and never know the meaning of it, or learn whether happiness or misery were awaiting him at home.

Home! how mighty was the waste of waters he had to traverse ere he could see its white cliffs again.

So violent was the fury of the storm, that to see the hands aloft endeavouring to furl or secure the fragments of the topsails, was calculated to strike terror, as momentarily they seemed in danger of being whirled off into the air.

Half a mile distant a partly dismasted ship, with the flag of the Royal Naval Reserve flying reversed at her gaff-peak, could be seen rising and falling beautifully on the long waves, at one time showing all her bows and nearly all her side, anon the whole line of her deck swept of everything from stem to stern, with her drenched crew clinging to the lower rigging or belaying pins. One moment she seemed lifted as if on the summit of a green hill, and the next seemed sunk in the deep dark valley ; but it soon became evident to the eyes of Captain Talbot, and of all on board the *Amethyst*, that the buoyancy of the stranger was gone—that she must have sprung a leak and was settling down in the water with terrible rapidity.

Even if boats could have been hoisted out, it would have been impossible to have succoured her in such a sea, and ere long, while a cry came across from her crew, to be echoed by another from that of the *Amethyst*, she went down by the stern and vanished from sight with every man on board of her.

“And this might have been our fate !” was the thought of Derval.

The tempest passed away to tear up other oceans, but so agitated was the water, that the *Amethyst* pitched and lurched heavily, while a new set of topsails were bent upon her ; all damages made so far good, and with a steady breeze she began to enter the straits of Sunda. By noon next day the south-east point of the Isle of Lombock, with its great

conical peak, eight thousand feet in height, bore S.S.W. on the starboard bow, and Captain Talbot steered for the strait of Allas, passed the isle to the westward and that of Sumbawa to the westward, which is reckoned the best and safest way to the eastward of Java; and at the beginning of the end of his pilgrimage, after running along the shore of Madura—the land of cotton, rice, and edible nests—Derval heard, with a sigh of satisfaction, the anchor let go in the roads of Batavia, as the ship swung at her moorings, with thirty-five fathoms and the small bower out, and the hands went aloft to furl the sails.

In his anxiety to return, to be off again as soon as possible, no man in the ship equalled Derval in his activity, with regard to getting the cargo out and another in, and daily he counted the hours while watching from the deck the lovely low green isles that stud the beautiful bay, the white-walled city, with its two-and-twenty bastions—"the Queen of the East," with all her palaces, villas, and trees, for there the Dutch, true to their national taste, have covered every available spot with verdure, flowers, and the brightest foliage.

Finally, the ballast and the last casks of sugar and turmeric were on board, the hatches battened down, and the boats hoisted in, and after a month's sojourn, in which he did not spend an idle hour, with a glow of joy he heard the orders given that were to take the ship out of the roadstead of Batavia.

"Mr. Grummet," cried the captain, "wea-

ther bit the chain forward, man the windlass, heave and haul! Mr. Hampton, get the top-sails loose—I see they are furled with reefs.”

“Away aloft, my lads,” said Derval, “make sail on her with a will.”

“Sheet home and hoist away—up with the yards to the caps; let fall the courses.”

Some of the head sails were now roused out of their nettings, the foretopmast staysail, and spanker were set, and then she was fully under weigh. She went through the water “like a thing of life,” and the flat Batavian shore began to sink.

“Home to England at last—home!” thought Derval as he looked over the side and saw the waves running under the counter, while he began to reckon for the thousandth time the probable period the homeward voyage might consume.

And now to take another homeward glance while that long voyage is in progress.

It was quite natural now, seeing so much as he did of a girl so beautiful as Clara, that in Rookleigh, though as yet he had never dared to attempt to caress her, or do more than take her passive or unwilling hand in his, the admiration of her person and inclination for her should increase, as a sense of propriety in her grew upon him; and also, that the opposition and indifference, with which he knew her heart was filled, should invite him to stronger efforts to reach, to win, and control it.

An illness that fell upon her delayed the

marriage, which Rookleigh had duly paragraphed in the papers as forthcoming. He knew now, that the ship which had perished near the Straits of Sunda was *not* the *Amethyst*; and he knew, moreover, from a visit he paid to her owners, that she was now on her homeward way, and that there was no time to be lost!

Yet the season of spring was nearly over before Clara, who had recovered slowly, at her father's pleasant house in the western suburbs of London, could face in any way the fate before her,—a fate that seemed terribly close now, and from which there was no escape but her own death, or the degradation of her father.

She saw, as part of a terrible phantasmagoria, her wedding dress, and other dresses, her nuptial trousseau, strewn all over her room, on her bed, on the chairs, reflected over and over again in the pier-glasses, her toilet-table littered with ornaments which, though rare and beautiful, she loathed to wear.

Guests were, of course, invited—a few only, however, as her father wished the sacrifice (for such he deemed it too) completed very quietly; the bridesmaids were selected—only four, all in the same costume, with ornaments the gift of the bridegroom; and to Clara, their flippant gossip, their conversation for ever on one topic—the marriage—girls whom she only knew as having met them “in society,” or little more,—were a source of perpetual worry and irritation to her.

Rookeleigh's mother, now in all her glory, came and went at will, quite *en famille* at Lord Oakhampton's house ; and she too, with her pale hazel eyes (the golden tint had faded out of them now), was another source of irritation to Clara, who looked so white, so wild-eyed and nervous, that her father, poor man, was crushed in heart and soul at the sight of her.

She felt like a poor little fly in the toils of some enormous spider. Never before did she think it was in her gentle nature to loathe any human being as she loathed this young man, whom she was so shortly to promise to love, honour, and obey, and with whom she was to go through the long weary years of the life that lay between to-morrow and the grave.

And in these years that would inexorably come, what might not his conduct become, and his treatment of her be, if, in the first flush of his own youth and of her beauty, he would be thus so unyieldingly cruel as to make her hand, freedom, and happiness the price of her father's title and honour, for the little that remained to him of a long, blameless, and honourable life—for Rookeleigh still had the trump card of playing to win the coronet for his absent brother.

Then a wild gust of horror and dismay would come over her, ever and anon, when she thought of the coming hour when she must inevitably and irrevocably become the wife of Rookeleigh, and there could be no escape from him but by death—and she felt that she



dared and could not die—or by flight—a flight that “society” would speedily twist into a terrible scandal!

The afternoon was drawing into evening—one Clara would never forget, for Mr. De Murrer was to arrive with the marriage settlements and contract for signature, and Clara, who had begged to be left for a little time to herself—her miserable self—was seated in a bay window lost in bitter thought, looking at the flowers of spring, and wondering how all would be with her when the time came that they had faded away and been replaced by those of summer.

Already soft showers had expanded the buds that but a week ago were closed, the foliage of the brightest green was hiding the dark branches of the trees. On all hands she heard the notes of the birds, and with that tendency which we have to note trifles when in great tribulation, she found herself watching with curious interest the bees and the butterflies among the bright parterres of flowers where the geranium, the heliotrope, the light green leaves of the echevaria and the cups of the tulips mingled.

All nature looked sweet; but the spring suggested nothing of hope to Clara, and she was past weeping now, in the bitter conviction that it availed her nothing; but a shiver passed over her, when she found that Rookleigh, claiming a bridegroom’s privilege, had come upon her unannounced, and was bending smilingly over her—could he do otherwise,

for the girl was adorably beautiful, and was so nearly now his own !

“To-morrow, Clara, my darling,” said he in a voice of more tenderness than it was quite his nature or his habit to assume, for true tenderness was not in him, “think of to-morrow, for long ere this hour we shall be united for life, and far away together !”

What she replied she never precisely knew, or cared perhaps to remember, so quickly did certain events come to pass just then.

The stoppage of a vehicle at the front porch, an important ring at the door bell, was followed by steps in the entrance-hall, and then a servant announced that “Mr. De. Murrer was in the library, where Lord Oakhampton awaited Miss Hampton and Mr. Rookleigh.”

“We are to sign the contract, and so forth, so take courage, Clara,” said Rookleigh, taking her by the hand, but she shrank on hearing voices below.

“A stranger is there !” said she timidly.

“Oh, only some fellow he has brought, no doubt, to witness our signatures ; he has delayed unaccountably long, so come, darling.”

Clara entered the half-darkened library, pale as snow, and trembling very much, and saw her father and Mr. De Murrer mutually shaking hands, and then with—Derval Hampton !

On reaching London, the latter was doubtful at first what to do to obtain information of Lord Oakhampton’s movements, of Clara

of his brother, and how to gain a clue to all that must have transpired during his protracted absence. As money was necessary for him, in the first place, he drove from the docks to Gray's Inn in quest of Mr. De Murrer, and at his chambers found that dapper little gentleman leisurely tying up with red tape a bundle of very legal-looking documents, which proved to be the contract and marriage settlements of "Rookleigh Hampton, Esquire, of Finglecombe, and the Honourable Clara Hampton," and thereby hung a wondrous tale!

It was with something of a sigh in his breast that the worthy little lawyer tied up these documents, for he disliked and mistrusted the bridegroom, and was astonished and grieved by the bearing of the luckless and too evidently repugnant bride. In all his legal experience he had met nothing like this.

Warmly indeed did he welcome Derval.

"Just in time, my dear young friend; just in time!" he exclaimed.

"Time for what?" asked the sunburned and weatherbeaten Derval.

"The wedding—of course, you know all about it."

"Wedding—whose?"

"Your brother."

"And — and —" stammered Derval, as the newspaper paragraph flashed upon his memory

"Miss Clara Hampton—a good marriage

indeed; a strange, but very good way of compromising the claim to the coronet—a consolidation of mutual interests, I take it to be; a family compact, quite.”

With his eyes fixed alternately on the speaker's face, and then, as one in a dream, surveying the great square of the Inn, with its monotonous brick walls and uniform rows of windows, Derval heard all this with equal astonishment and dismay.

“I am just about to take these papers to Lord Oakhampton's; you will go with me, of course, and sign them as witness.”

“Clara false—so fair, yet so false!” was Derval's bitter thought, as he threw himself into a chair.

A very few words served to enlighten him as to the conspiracy of which they had both been the victims—as to the pressure which must have been put upon the unhappy Clara to save her father's title, during his life at least, by the sacrifice of herself; and more exasperating to him was the knowledge that this pressure had been put upon her by Rookleigh, while acting nominally in the interests of an absent brother; and he knew in a moment that Rookleigh—the medium of their correspondence—must, for his own nefarious ends, have effectually suppressed it!

“And now, as we are on this unpleasant subject,” said the lawyer, opening a drawer and taking therefrom a paper, “what was the meaning of this mysterious document that Rookleigh framed and you signed?”

"It referred, I understood, to a sum of money I lent him."

"Of what folly you were guilty! *he* should have signed an acknowledgment to *you*. Good heavens! you sailors are strange fellows."

"Then what are the contents of the paper?"

"Merely that you make over to your brother the whole of the £500 per annum left you by your father, with all your right, title, and interest therein."

Derval was astounded and bewildered, not at his own folly and simplicity, but by the systematic baseness of his brother.

"Oh, wretch!" he exclaimed; "was it not enough to rob me of all, even my poor patrimony? but to seek to rob me too of Clara, my affianced wife!"

For a few moments his emotions were stifling, and he gasped rather than breathed.

"I must own," said Mr. De Murrer, "that when the post brought this singular document, signed by you, and witnessed by Rookleigh, the *framer* of it, illegally expressed and on unstamped paper, I was sorely puzzled; but, luckily, it is every way valueless."

"Save in so far as revealing the perfidy of which he is capable—the double villain!"

"While searching your father's papers for documents in connection with the peerage affair, I came upon one which completely alters all your affairs, and that I shall show you in time," said Mr. De Murrer.

"He need no longer now pretend to act in

my interests in pressing on the peerage case, and not a moment must be lost in freeing my poor Clara from the trammels—the evil of mental misery—by which he has surrounded her.”

“Good, good!” said the little lawyer, rubbing his hands. “The contract and the settlements won’t be signed, after all, and may go with Rookleigh’s document into the wastepaper basket. But I was due with them at Lord Oakhampton’s an hour ago—a hansom will take us there in half that time; and now, my dear Derval, let us be off!”

To the confusion of Rookleigh, the mystery of the letters was all unfolded now, and when the cheques he had paid Miss Sally Trix came to be known, through Mr. De Murrer, a light was thrown upon his transactions with her, and the use to which he had put her with Clara; thus link after link was found, and the chain of his cruelty and duplicity was complete!

Rookleigh did not wait for the elucidation of all the reader knows. His brother’s sudden appearance in the library was more than enough for him; he evacuated Lord Oakhampton’s house with all speed, and even quitted London that night, a prey to baffled spite, ambition, and treachery.

“Oh, Derval, Derval,” said Clara, as she reclined upon his breast, “may God forgive that man for all he has made me suffer!”

“And me too, darling!”

If Derval’s blood boiled at his half-brother’s perfidy, it boiled still more when he

thought of how a head-wind in the Channel or elsewhere might, by delay, have affected the fortune of all who figured in the tableau in Lord Oakhampton's library. But the good ship *Amethyst* had brought the wind with her, bravely and splendidly had she run, and scarcely sheet or tack were lifted, "for," as Joe Grummet said, "the girls at home were tallying on to the tow-rope."

The document which the lawyer had found among Greville Hampton's papers proved to be nothing less than a will, dated subsequent to one on which they had all acted, and which reversed its terms, for £500 yearly were all that accrued to Rookleigh, while all else he possessed was bequeathed to Derval; so the hand of Nemesis fell heavily on the former.

So the wedding dresses, the wedding cake and breakfast, and the bridesmaids too were all required eventually; but a different bridegroom knelt by Clara's side before the altar rails at St. George's, Hanover Square, while Rookleigh and his amiable mother were left at Finglecombe "to chew the cud of sweet and bitter fancy."

Captain Talbot was groomsman, and old Joe Grummet, who with difficulty was restrained from hoisting a flag of the Royal Naval Reserve out of the drawing-room window, as a prelude to the rice and slippers, got disreputably tipsy in the butler's pantry, and pulled all the housemaids about, in the exuberance of his joy, making quite a riot in the servants' hall.

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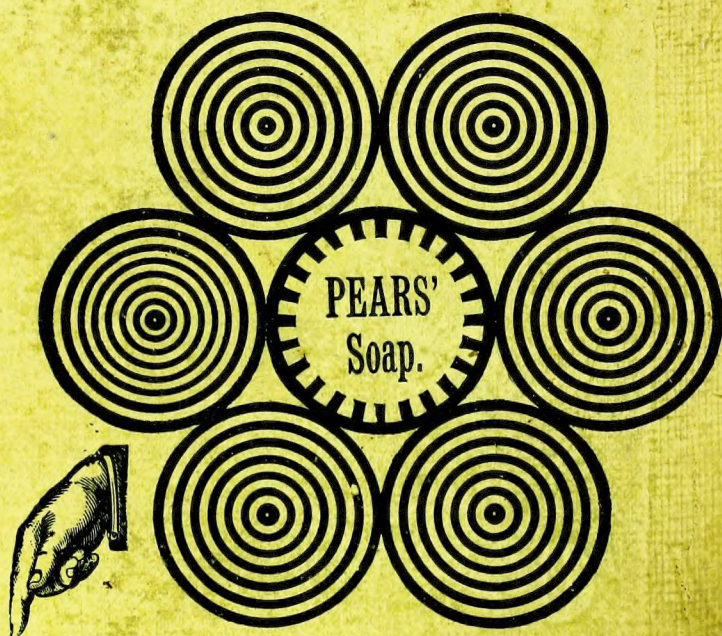
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